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THESIS

THE POLICY OF THE BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY, 1980 AND 2008: POSSIBLE INFLUENCE OF HINDU NATIONALISM ON INDIAN POLITICS

by

Carsten Busch

June 2009

Co-Advisors: Anshu Chatterjee
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The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is one of the few Indian political parties which contest nationwide. Its Hindu nationalistic appeal changed over time. In 1998, the BJP gained power and formed a coalition to rule India. Against some expectations, it did not transfer its Hindu nationalistic ideology into practice when it came to domestic and international politics. This thesis answers the question of which factors affected the behavior of the BJP and influenced the BJP's policy. It argues that the BJP did not change its basic Hindu nationalistic character. It is still a political party with nationalistic party identity. But, political diversity of India led to an adjustment of enforceable political goals and the development of a flexible policy to gain political power. India's federal system, in combination with the trend towards factionalism, led to the necessity of coalition building among political parties. Thus, even the BJP had to use tactical shifts to partly moderate its rhetoric, along with other strategies in different states, to build coalitions with different political parties.

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**THE POLICY OF THE BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY, 1980 AND 2008:
POSSIBLE INFLUENCE OF HINDU NATIONALISM ON INDIAN POLITICS**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

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I.   INTRODUCTION

A.   PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE OF STUDY

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is a Hindu nationalist party in India. Upon formation in 1980, the party leadership tried to present the BJP as the democratic alternative to the Indian National Congress (INC) by focusing on issues which were historically on the INC's agenda. Upon losing the elections of 1984, the BJP changed its course by focusing on and using Hindu nationalistic rhetoric. The BJP began Hindu religious and nationalistic agitation and started the Ayodhya campaign that led to the demolition of the Babri mosque in 1992. In the aftermath of the demolition of the Babri mosque, riots between Muslims and Hindus occurred across the country. As a result, more then 2,000 people were killed. The riots resulting from the events in Ayodhya began a phase of increasing tensions between Hindus and Muslims in India which may still be seen today. However, shortly after the riots of 1992, the BJP changed its course towards more moderate politics. Consequently, in 1998, the BJP won 182 out of 545 seats in the Lok Sabha and was able to form a government at the center as part of a coalition. After the election of 1999, where the BJP won 284 out of 543 seats, the BJP was able to form a stable coalition which lasted until 2004.

The BJP's changing strategy and platform before 2004 illustrates that its policies and behavior may be unpredictable and shifting. A political party which had in the past demonstrated a lack of scruples about increasing tensions and creating a potential for riots was not expected to show restraint about provoking tensions between India and its neighbors. With this expectation, some observers anticipated increasing tensions at the border between the three nuclear powers, India, Pakistan and China. Interestingly, contrary to these expectations, India's international policy did not become more confrontational under the BJP.

Although the BJP government began its administration in 1998 with a demonstration of strength towards Pakistan by testing five nuclear bombs in May 1998, its overall course was less nationalistic than expected. One may even argue that had the

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Congress been in power, the same would have occurred since the nuclear program had been initiated under the Congress. In 1999, when the Indian government reacted to a Pakistani intrusion into Kargil in Kashmir with massive use of land and air forces, the government limited the intervention to the Indian state of Kashmir and Jammu. Despite the obvious that the intruders were supported by Pakistan, the BJP government did not use the incident to expand its military mission. Instead, the BJP government acted responsibly, stopped the advance of the Indian troops at the Line of Control (LOC) and prevented herewith an escalation of the conflict into a war between India and Pakistan. In sum, the behaviour of the BJP government during the Kargil War was a success for Indian international policy and the BJP's image. India's domestic politics did not change significantly either. The BJP's rhetoric on the national level was quite moderate. In some states, classical Hindutva themes were put back on the BJP's party agenda. What are the factors that affected the janus-headed behavior of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and led to changes in the party's behavior? Is the BJP still a Hindu nationalistic party driven by a Hindu nationalistic ideology, or a party with a paramount interest in gaining power?

Seeking answers to such questions is important for various reasons. First, India is the hegemonic power in South Asia with tremendous regional influence. A major shift in India's policy will affect the region and its stability. Second, India's policy is decisive for the security of the Indian Ocean and its shipping routes from Europe to East Asia. Third, India is a nuclear power involved in border disputes (Kashmir and Arunanchal Pradesh) with two other nuclear powers (Pakistan and China). A shift in Indian policy can lead to an escalation of conflict in the disputed areas and may pose a nuclear threat to the world. Fourth, India is a democracy with the largest population in the world and serves as an example for developing countries. Changes in the democratic foundation of India may affect other developing countries as well.

It is important to examine the Bharatiya Janata Party's background and agenda because, along with the Indian National Congress, it had a realistic chance of winning the 2009 elections in India. Knowing more about the BJP, its roots and connections, as well as its political behavior makes shifts and changes more predictable and can help with

policy in the future. Additionally, understanding the BJP's behavior and its use of religious and nationalistic rhetoric can help to improve the general understanding of how such parties behave in democracies.

This thesis, therefore, offers to explain the BJP's behavior and expand on the factors that affect it.

B.   PROBLEMS AND HYPOTHESES

India is a multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic state. "It has 1652 languages (including dialects), 190 religions (including different religious sects), 26 states (the states comprises of different regions claiming autonomy) and 3742 castes."[1] Tensions and riots between Hindus and Muslims distressed India during the phase of separation of India and Pakistan. But violence between Hindus and Muslims continued in India after 1950 on an acceptable level for a multiethnic society.[2] It increased again in the 1980s when Hindu nationalism rose. Following incidents in 1992, the relations between Hindus and Muslims deteriorated and endangered the secularist orientation of the country. The Hindu nationalist movement, led by organizations such as the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS – National Volunteer Organization), and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP – World Hindu Council), an offshoot of the RSS, gained more influence. Their ideas and the legacy of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh Party (BJS – Indian People's Union), a predecessor of the BJP, influenced the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which began to exploit religious issues for political purposes.

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[1] Kiran Saxena, "Hindutva of the Sangh Parivar and the Plural Society in India," *Class, Ideology and Political Parties in India*, eds. Arun K. Jana and Bhupen Sarmah (Colorado Springs: International Academic Publishers LTD, 2002), 168.

[2] S. D. Muni, "Ethnic Conflict, Federalism, and Democracy in India," *Ethnicity and Power in the Contemporary World*, eds. Kumar Rupesinghe and Valery A. Tishkov (Toronto: United Nations University Press, 1996), 183 shows as the official data for 1955: 75 communal incidents, 24 people killed and 475 people injured. These numbers increased until 1985: 525 communal incidents, 328 persons killed, 3,665 persons injured. Ashutosh Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 87-111 shows different data sets for the national and the state level. Her data correspond with the official data but goes into more detail. She shows for example that most of the riots took place in urban areas. In contrast to this, rural areas were spared by riots.

In 1998, when the BJP gained power and formed a coalition at the center, it did not transfer its Hindu nationalist ideology into practice when it came to domestic and international politics. What were the reasons for this unexpected behavior by a Hindu nationalist party? Different explanations are possible.

First, one could draw attention to the fact that India is a part of the international system and its behavior is dependent on the regulations of the international community and the expectations of partner nations. Despite a nationalistic ideology of a ruling party, any Indian government has to act according to the regulations of the international system and the expectations of partner nations. Only this kind of international policy can secure India an adequate position in the international system and form the necessary conditions for India's economic development. Following this argument, Hindu nationalism could not in any way affect Indian policy in the international system without endangering India's position in that international system. Maintaining an important international image is part of the BJP's campaign promises.[3]

Second, one could emphasize that secularism in India is deeply rooted in society and provides a common ground for the work of the Indian administration despite all differences in political matters. In accordance with this argument, tensions in India, riots and Hindu nationalism and other forms of cultural and ethnic expression appear only in terms of resource competition, but are subject to change when another political party comes to power. With such an argument, it would be doubtful whether Hindu nationalism as a policy choice could ever develop enough power to dominate Indian international and domestic policies because the executive power of India's democracy would repulse all attempts to influence politics with a religious ideology.

If this is true, Hindu nationalists, when in power, would not have any impact on India's external relations except in the case of Kashmir. One has to question whether the Kashmir problem is a domestic problem of India, as Hindu nationalists argue, or a

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[3] See, for example, chapter 7 of the BJP Election Manifesto 1998 http://www.bjp.org/content/view/2631/376/ (accessed October 10, 2009). "In the recent past we have seen a tendency to bend under pressure. This arises as much out of ignorance of our rightful place and role in world affairs as also from a loss of national self-confidence and resolve. A nation as large and capable as ourselves must make its impact felt on the world arena. A BJP Government will demand a premier position for the country in all global fora."

problem of foreign policy, as Pakistan argues. It depends on one's point of view whether the practical Kashmir politics of India could be influenced by Hindu nationalism and the politics of a Hindu nationalism party. If the Kashmir problem is seen as a domestic problem, the real character of Hindu nationalism could be decisive for Indian politics under rule of a Hindu nationalist party because Kashmir is one of the few regions in India with a Hindu minority. Here, one can examine the relationship of Hindu nationalists towards other religions in India.

A third explanation, offered by several important scholars, would be to argue that when the BJP comes to power at the center as a member of a coalition made up of several different agendas at the national level, it has to make compromises which moderate its dominant Hindu nationalistic character. If this is true, the BJP when in power as part of a coalition has no mandate in the political constellation of India. However, we have yet to see what it would act like when it is in full power. For that, we should look at the states where it does hold a majority in order to understand what its behavior might be.

A final argument could be that since Hindu nationalism is no longer as militant as it was in 1992 during the Ayodhya incident and the following riots, the success of the BJP belongs only partly to the mobilization of Hindu nationalist sentiment and the exploitation of symbols of Hinduism. Now, as a national party, it behaves differently. Additional factors have become a priority for practical politics of the party since it gained a national presence, and especially after 1998.

In order to evaluate the possible influence of Hindu nationalism and BJP politics on Indian policy, it is necessary to examine the nature of Hindu nationalism and the BJP's politics to extract the basic tenets of Hindu nationalism and the BJP's party politics.

The examination here will show that all of the above factors play a role in explaining the behavior of the BJP as a ruling party. But, it is neither Indian democracy nor the nature of Hinduism which guarantees that Hindu nationalism will not have any

influence on Indian policy in the future. Democracy and secularism are indeed an integral part of Indian society, even if some scholars, such as Jalal Ayesha,[4] have their doubts about the depths of their roots in the society.

The main point is that the diversity of Indian society, with its various demands in connection with the trend towards communalization has hampered the return of a one party system for India. It supports coalition building on the national level and requires the ability of different parties to make compromises in order to rule the country. This makes it difficult, if not impossible, for the government to be dominated by any special ideology.

This thesis argues that political diversity in India led to an adjustment of enforceable political goals for the BJP during its period of governing India. The enforcement of Hindu nationalist objectives in Kashmir were not a primary goal for the BJP government compared to maintaining a position as a leader of the coalition. But, this adjustment of BJP politics did not mean that Hindu nationalism had lost power or that the BJP had changed its goals for the future. The thesis of this examination is that although the BJP has shelved Hindu nationalist objectives, it is still a nationalist party and is capable of reviving its Hindu nationalist objectives if it can gain advantages by doing so.

C.   METHODOLOGY AND ORGANIZATION

According to Bardach, "Policy analysis is more art than science. It draws on intuition as much as method."[5] The reason for this judgment about policy analysis is the complexity of the research area and the involvement of humans and the uncertainty of human behavior. Therefore, White argues: "Policies, and public problems in general, are embedded in complex, dimly perceived institutional and historical context. Stakeholders are numerous, and their interests not obvious. Any given situation will have meanings to

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[4] Ayesha Jalal, *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia: A Comparative and Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

[5] Eugene Bardach, *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*. 2nd ed. (Washington, D.C: CQ Press, 2005), xiv.

some that can hardly be imagined by others of different background, training, or social location."[6] Thus, after defining the problem, in principle, one has firstly to arrange and examine the relevant factors of the problem situation. This will help to reduce the complexity of the problem situation, to reveal hidden facts and interests, and to reduce the range of interpretations. As White states, relevant factors are the institutional context, the historical context, and stakeholders (key players) and their interests.

This examination will follow the principles of White's explanation and examine the context of BJP's policy. The institutional framework for the behavior of the BJP is built by the principles of party politics, the principles of state's behavior, the framework of India's democracy and its political party system. Stakeholders, in the sense of White, are Hindu nationalists and supporters of the BJP. Obviously, the historical context is relevant for examining the development of BJP's policy over time, but it is also relevant for explaining the institutional framework and the behavior of key players. To avoid that a too broad general depiction of the BJP policy over time lead to a misjudgment about BJP's policy, the examination also has to include case studies to explore in more detail which factors and how those factors shaped BJP's behavior in single cases.

In order to follow the depicted methodology, the thesis is organized as an examination comprised of the introduction, three chapters and the conclusion.

The thesis is comprised of the introduction (Chapter I), three chapters and the conclusion. Chapter II provides the theoretical framework for the BJP's behavior and some major cornerstones of India's democracy. The theoretical framework consists of two parts. The first part examines the principles of party politics, the second deals with the politics of nation-states. To explain the BJP's behavior as a political party, the party's foundation is examined in order to find out which forces influence its behavior. Furthermore, the examination of some major factors which influence state behavior shows the possible limitations placed on a party's ideology in influencing the politics of a nation-state. Additionally, an examination of the cornerstones of India's democracy shows how the construction of India's democracy has shaped India's party system and

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[6] Michael J. White, "Policy Analysis Models," *Encyclopedia of Policy Studies*, edited by Stuart S. Nagel (New York: Marcel Dekker Inc., 1983), 44.

the behavior of political parties. These examinations will then be used as references to explain the BJP's behavior.

Chapter III gives an overview of Hindu nationalism. The first part of the chapter explains the most relevant terms of Hindu nationalism to ensure a common understanding of these basic terms. The second part of the chapter examines the Hindu Nationalist network to show the main Hindu nationalistic forces in India, their connections, and their influence on the BJP.

Chapter IV explains the BJP's politics in more detail. The examination consists of two case studies and historical issues. The examination of BJP's politics over a time frame of twenty-eight years shows continuities and discontinuities in its behavior in order to discover the core character of the BJP as a basis to predict its future behavior. Additionally, the two case studies provide examples of the BJP's politics and behavior in two prominent examples. The Ayodhya case is an example of how the BJP behaves in the domestic sphere and how Hindu nationalism influences its behavior. The Kashmir case demonstrates how domestic politics and Hindu nationalism may influence the behavior of a government with relevance for international relations. Together, both examples show which factors influence the BJP's behavior, lead to certain political actions by the BJP, and how Hindu nationalism influences politics in India.

Chapter V offers a conclusion of the findings and gives a prospective of the BJP's behavior in the future.

II. DEMOCRACIES AND POLICY MAKING

This chapter examines the primary framework for the behavior of political parties in general and especially for India. To explain a party's behavior in principle, first one has to analyze the foundation of party politics. This means looking at roles and functions of political parties and examining the different forces which try to influence and shape a party's behavior. Herewith, one gains a theoretical overview about party politics in a liberal democracy and what shapes their behavior. This will serve as the reference for the examination of the BJP's behavior. In addition, it is necessary to examine the theoretical framework for the behavior of a nation-state in the context of domestic and international relations in order to explain the BJP's behavior. Furthermore, it is necessary to have a closer look at some major aspects of India's democracy in order to examine the institutional framework for political parties in India. This institutional framework for political parties will be used in subsequent chapters in order to explain the BJP's behavior and its shifts over time

A. THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1. Party Politics

Defining a political party is not as easy as it seems. Various definitions of parties emphasize their function as instruments to mediate between citizens (voters) and government, their function as a tool to gain power or to focus on the ideological roots of parties. Any definition has, therefore, less explanatory power, and will probably provoke disagreement rather than consensus.[7] It is also difficult to identify the relative position of a political party in comparison to any other political party.[8] However, for the purpose of this examination, it is less important to find a common definition of political parties or to distinguish political parties from each other than to examine a political party's general

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[7] John Kenneth White, "What is a Political Party?" *Handbook of Party Politics*, eds. Richard S. Katz and William Crotty (London: Sage Publications, 2006), 5-15.

[8] See Ian Budge, "Identifying Dimensions and Locating Parties: Methodological and Conceptual Problems," *Handbook of Party Politics*, eds. Richard S. Katz and William Crotty (London: Sage Publications, 2006), 413-421.

roles and functions to find out which forces influence the party's behavior and to get a glimpse of the relationship between society, party and government. This examination will help to better understand party behavior and its changes over time.

a.   *Roles and Functions of Political Parties in Liberal Democracies*

Political parties in liberal democracies fulfill various functions. Depending on the type of political party, these functions are revealed differently. In principle, the main function of political parties in a liberal democracy is to serve as a connecting link between the people and the political entities. They serve this function in various ways. **First**, political parties are a means for representation of the people. **Second**, they communicate the opinions of the people and social groups to the state and the public realm. **Third**, they reconcile interests of various social groups. **Fourth**, they mediate between the people and the political entities. **Fifth**, they help to select people for official posts. Altogether, political parties **finally** fulfill a role to ensure legitimacy for democracy and state institutions. [9]

One of the major functions of political parties in a democracy is representing the people. Who is to be represented and forms in which the representation should occur depend on the political system in the country, on the organization and composition of the political party and on the individual delegate. In principle, a delegate can represent a group of the people (based on demographic criteria), an opinion of the electorate, the constituents by following their direct instructions or acting in the interest of the electorate by using his own judgment, or serve as an ombudsman for the electorate. In the same matter, political parties can serve in various ways as means for representation. But, political parties always represent just a specific part of the electorate. The electorate as a whole is represented by the parliament and the sum of all delegates and political parties.[10]

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[9] For a further distinction between types of political parties and the relationship between type and function see Richard Gunther and Larry Diamond, "Types and Functions of Parties," *Political Parties and Democracy*, eds. Larry Diamond and Richard Gunther (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2001), 3-39.

[10] Richard S. Katz, "Party in Democratic Theory," *Handbook of Party Politics*, eds. Richard S. Katz and William Crotty (London: Sage Publications, 2006), 34-46 and 42-44.

By communicating with the electorate and its various social groups, political parties integrate different political opinions, interests and expectations and form a new position which includes major points of all relevant groups and can gain support from the majority of the party's electorate. Therefore, political parties fulfill an important function in the process of opinion forming and participation of the people in a democracy. In contrast to interest groups which represent the interests of different power groups, political parties can serve as a forum for those people who have no access to interest groups or they can bring various groups together. Without political parties, it is probable that poor people would gain no influence in the opinion building process of a country. Their participation in politics would, therefore, be limited to participation in elections.

As shown, the function of political parties in the process of opinion forming is not limited to serving as a vehicle for interests of different social groups. Additionally, political parties serve as a filter to reconcile different interests and find a consensus or a compromise for representation in the ongoing process of opinion forming and decision making. This filter function leads to a marginalization of extreme positions, balances different interests, and helps to make the decision making process on the state level more efficient.[11] This positive consequence of the process is affiliated with the negative effect that, for example, legitimate claims of minorities often get lost in the process except when the minorities find an independent party for representation of their interests.[12]

With their mediating position between the people and the political entities, political parties are also able to mediate directly between the people and the government. Especially in cases where decisions of a central government may have major impact on specific regions or specific groups of society, political parties play an important role in negotiating between the government and the persons affected. Political parties have more access to the decisive political power institutions than interest groups, know the rules of

[11] Ken Kollman, John H. Miller, and Scott E. Page, "Political Parties and Electoral Landscapes," *British Journal of Political Science* 28, no. 1 (January 1998): 139-158.

[12] Peter M. Leslie. "The Role of Political Parties in Promoting the Interests of Ethnic Minorities," *Canadian Journal of Political Science / Revue Canadienne De Science Politique* 2, no. 4 (December 1969): 419-433.

the political "game" and can balance between the claims of the people and the interests of the government. By taking care of this function, political parties can gain more legitimacy for speaking on behalf of the people.[13]

Because of their special position in the democratic process, political parties are a major resource for the selection of personnel for leading posts in a bureaucracy and the executive branch. One obvious argument for this function is that the government has to rely on loyal obedience in the executive branch. Another argument is that political parties gather a lot of experience with political procedures and are, therefore, particularly suited to selecting the right persons for relevant posts in the political sphere. However, critics of this function of political parties argue that loyalty is less decisive for leading posts than qualifications and knowledge. Additionally, they criticize that the argument about expertise of selection by political parties hides the fact that political parties misuse their opportunities to select people for official posts to establish a kind of patronage system or nepotism.[14]

Political parties are part of the process of formation of political objectives in a democracy. Without political parties, the opportunities of the people to become involved in the process of formation of political objectives are reduced. People would have fewer opportunities to express their opinions and interests and to gain influence. How far political parties fulfill these different functions depends on the country's individual political system, the individual circumstances of the country and on the individual political party and its voter base. In principle, one can argue that political parties have more importance in a parliamentary system than in a presidential system where associations and different interest groups are more involved in the process of opinion formation. In the case of India, this is likewise true for the role and the function of the BJP.

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[13] Hans Keman "Parties and Government: Features of Governing in Representative Democracies," *Handbook of Party Politics*, edited by Richard S. Katz and William Crotty, 160-174 (London: Sage Publications, 2006).

[14] Marjorie Randon Hershey, "Political Parties as Mechanisms of Social Choice," *Handbook of Party Politics*, eds. Richard S. Katz and William Crotty (London: Sage Publications, 2006), 75-88. And Wolfgang Mueller, "Party Patronage and Party Colonization of the State" in *Handbook of Party Politics*, eds. Richard S. Katz and William Crotty (London: Sage Publications, 2006), 189-195.

b.   *Behavior of Political Parties in Liberal Democracies*

(1) The Influence of the Voter Base and the Party Identity. The behavior of political parties is influenced by several factors. One obvious factor is the set of roles and functions parties have to play in a liberal democracy to ensure the legitimacy of democracy and state institutions. Political parties connect the people and political institutions and help to ensure awareness of the political process, opinion forming and democracy in the population. They offer the people an opportunity to express their opinions and to participate in the process of the formation of political objectives, and to decide about the direction of politics. As a product of the opinion of the party's voter base, political parties offer the people an idea or an ideology. The ideology is the core of a political party. Or, as Vasallo mentions "Political ideologies portray the true essence of parties, as in 'what they are,'…"[15] The party's ideology is laid down in a party manifesto. These manifestos serve two main functions. The first is that they are an expression of people's opinions and interests. The second is that the individual party tries to convince the people about political opinions.[16] In this sense, ideologies are tools to attract voters, but also a means to motivate activists and build bridges to collateral organizations. Parties' behaviors may change over time, but a change of their core ideology at the foundation of the party is very unlikely. Political parties usually retain a general ideological tendency.[17]

The reason for retention of a general ideology is two fold. On the one hand, structural changes of society, structural dealignments, declining party identification, changes in value orientations, issue competition, fluctuations between governments and opposition parties and changes within the parties (party crisis) lead to changes of the electoral markets over time. To stay competitive in the marketplace of ideas in liberal democracies, political parties have to respond to these alterations and have

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[15] Francesca Vasallo and Clyde Wilcox, "Party as a Carrier of Ideas," *Handbook of Party Politics*, eds. Richard S. Katz and William Crotty (London: Sage Publications, 2006), 414.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

to make changes in their manifestos and adjust their behavior.[18] As an examination of political parties in Western Europe shows, parties often response by transforming "… themselves more and more into centralized and professional campaigning organizations, in which the scope for the amateur politician has been curtailed, and in which the weight and direction of the party strategy have tended increasingly to be located within the leadership as such."[19] The tendency towards the center of social opinion means that cleavages in society have lost importance for organizing politics. Additionally, Larson argues, "Even where cleavages clearly exist, parties are more likely to win national elections by avoiding them and reaching out to a much larger electorate."[20] On the other hand, a party's opportunities for change are limited due to their ideological foundations. Parties with strong ideological foundations must face the problem that opportunities for change are limited by the party's ideology. A party's ideology serves an important purpose because it ensures cohesiveness of the political party. And this cohesiveness ensures that the party acts as a team and gives the voter at the polls the opportunity to make the team responsible for its action.[21]

Herewith, the core voter base of a party is, in principle, decisive for the formulation of the ideology and is one decisive factor which influences the party's behavior. Every party has to examine its voter base and the opinions of its party members. In order to play their role in the political arena and serve as mediators between the people and the government, political parties have to be organized according to the principles of democracy. This means that every member of the party in principle has to have the same chance to gain influence on the process of the party's political opinion

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[18] Peter Mair, Wolfgang C. Mueller and Fritz Plasser, "Introduction: Electoral Challenges and Party Responses," *Political Parties and Electoral Change. Party Responses to Electoral Markets*, eds. Peter Mair, Wolfgang C. Mueller and Fritz Plasser (London: Sage Publications, 2004), 1-19.

[19] Peter Mair, Wolfgang C. Mueller and Fritz Plasser, "Conclusion: Political Parties in Changing Electoral Markets," *Political Parties and Electoral Change. Party Responses to Electoral Markets*, eds. Peter Mair, Wolfgang C. Mueller and Fritz Plasser (London: Sage Publications, 2004), 265.

[20] Kay Lawson, "Five Variations on a Theme. Interest Aggregation by Party Today," *How Political Parties Respond. Interest Aggregation Revisited*, eds. Kay Lawson and Thomas Poguntke (London: Routledge, 2004), 253.

[21] Richard S. Katz, *A Theory of Parties and Electoral Systems* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2007), 3.

formation as any other member of the party. The inner party opinion forming process has to be organized in a way that allows different opinions to be openly expressed and discussed. The will of the party (leadership) should not stand above the will of the party members.[22] Thus, one of the decisive features of political parties is a constant bargaining process inside the political party about the future direction of party politics. Therefore, party behavior may vary over time due to a changing balance of power inside the party.

But, the search for acceptable compromises in the political bargaining process is not just limited to the inner workings of a political party. Party behavior is influenced as well by a bargaining process with the outside. Political parties often use other organizations that share a common basis with that political party to ensure constant communication with the electorate to learn about the will of the people and to strengthen ties to the electorate. These collateral organizations promise to support the political party in exchange for gaining influence through the political parties. According to Poguntke, a key feature is that "This exchange is based on more or less permanent and formalized negotiations between party elites and organizational elites (…) by which policy concessions (by the party) are traded for the mobilization of organizational support (by the organization)."[23] Dependent on the membership (e.g., overlapping between party and organization), organizational ties, control by the party or influence of the organization, one can distinguish various types of collateral organizations which support political parties. But, in any case, political parties have to pay for the support by collateral organizations. Strong connections to a collateral organization limit the freedom of action for a political party.[24] For instance, in the case of the BJP, strong connections to collateral Hindu nationalistic organizations may help to explain the BJP's behavior and its Hindu nationalistic approach to politics between 1984 and 1992.

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[22] Reuven Y. Hazan and Gideon Rahat, "Candidate Selection: Methods and Consequences," *Handbook of Party Politics*, eds. Richard S. Katz and William Crotty (London: Sage Publications, 2006), 109-121.

[23] Thomas Poguntke, "Political Parties and Other Organizations," *Handbook of Party Politics*, eds. Richard S. Katz and William Crotty (London: Sage Publications, 2006), 396.

[24] Ibid., 402.

(2) The Influence of Other Forces and Party Interests In addition to collateral organizations which share a common basis with the political party, parties also have to deal with other kinds of interest groups. Besides the media, the bureaucracy, academics and others, interest groups play an important role in liberal democracies and have significant power to influence politics. All these forces offer political parties the opportunity to gain different kinds of benefits, and to expand their support base or their sphere of influence. These forces also have an interest in gaining influence in political parties because only elected party members offer direct and long lasting participation in the process of political opinion forming and decision making.[25]

Political parties do not just have the goal to unite voters under the head of a party in order to express the opinion of the electorate. Another practical goal is to gain the necessary power in order to influence politics. A political party that only represents the standpoint of its voter base by rejecting opposing standpoints does not achieve anything in the political arena. Not only that, such a party would not be able to gain influence for the interests of its voters; it would also give up opportunities to fulfill the general roles and functions of a political party in a democracy. In order to fulfill these roles, a political party has to develop the ability to actively participate in politics by balancing the desire of the electorate with what is attainable in practical politics. This includes the mentioned bargaining process inside and outside the political party as well as bargaining with other forces. Without consideration of the stance of the media, of public opinion and public mood, support of interest groups and academics, and control over the bureaucracy, a political party would not be able to successfully transform its ideas into executive power.[26] The ability to build a minimum consensus is a precondition for any successful government politics.

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[25] John W. Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, (New York: Harper Collins College, 1995) shows an example of how, in principle, this process of influencing, opinion forming, agenda setting, and decision making works in the U.S.

[26] Hans Keman, "Parties and Government: Features of Governing in Representative Democracies." in *Handbook of Party Politics*, edited by Richard S. Katz and William Crotty, 160-174 (London: Sage Publications, 2006).

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Additionally, political parties have to be able to form alliances and build coalitions in order to form a government. Especially in democracies with proportional representation or Mixed Member Electoral Systems, it is unlikely that one party is able to win a majority of the seats in parliament. In parliamentary systems, this means that coalition building is very likely necessary to form the government and transfer the vote of the electorate into executive power. Therefore, under these circumstances, political parties that want to gain influence in the executive have to deal with the problem of coalition building.[27] Different theories have evolved to explain how political parties form coalitions and why they form specific coalitions. But, these theories are not sufficient to explain and predict coalition building. Besides a variety of theoretical problems to analyze and predict coalition building, three main factors seem to influence the process of coalition building. **First**, the desire of a political party to gain influence and power. **Second**, coalitions are built with the minimum necessary number of different parties to ensure a majority in parliament. **Third**, political parties are prone to choosing those political parties with fewer ideological differences to form a coalition to ensure a coherent policy of the coalition.[28]

The task for any political party that wants to gain executive power and be part of a coalition is to balance the core interests of the voter base with the necessity of coming to compromises with its coalition partners. Or, in other words, the party leadership has to gain influence by reaching compromises and forming alliances without losing its party identity. The outcome of this bargaining process is a coalition agreement in which the coalition partners establish rules of cooperation between the coalition partners, reach agreements in various fields of politics, and set the direction of future politics. This balancing process is more difficult than it seems. One obvious reason is that inside a coalition, political opinions concerning details of future politics often are often diverse. Another reason is that after elections, the electorate's power to influence the political direction of a political party is weakened, and the function of the political

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[27] See: Katz, *A Theory of Parties and Electoral Systems*, 151, for a more detailed view of the relationship between electoral systems and party systems.

[28] Lieven De Winter and Patrick Dumont, "Parties into Government: Still Many Puzzles" in *Handbook of Party Politics*, eds. Richard S. Katz and William Crotty (London: Sage Publications, 2006), 175-188.

party for the people over time may be replenished by functions for the political party itself. Critics of political party systems often argue that party officials forget the supporting function of the political party for the people. Instead of serving the electorate, party officials focus more on personal advantages or the advantages for the political party itself. The party's orientation often shifts away from the notion that the will of the people sets the direction of the party, and that party politics is tied to the will of the people. Instead of focusing on goals set by the electorate, the survival or the power of a political party and its leaders becomes the ultimate goal and an end in itself. The supporting function of political parties for the people then is replaced by a supporting function of the people for the party. As an examination of political parties in democracies shows, most political parties reassure the losers of society but fulfill the needs of the winners of society when they are elected. What distinguishes major political parties' from each other are therefore different standpoints on issues which are of less interest for the voters.[29]

c. Conclusion

Political parties fulfill important functions in the political arena as mediators between the people and the state and ensure legitimacy for democracy and state institutions. Political parties stand for the opinions and interests of the party members. But, especially in parties up to a certain size, it impossible to speak about just one opinion or interest of all party members. Party opinion is formed and party interest is defined by an inner party bargaining process including collateral organizations. Therefore, party opinion and party interests are always compromises consisting of many individual opinions and interests. Even if the general orientation (based on a political idea or ideology) of a political party is stable, the party direction may vary over time or in certain details. This variation is an expression of the development of the party and the bargaining process within the party and with collateral organizations. In the case of the BJP, this means that it is likely that the party's direction will change over time, but it is unlikely that the ideology will change significantly.

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[29] Lawson, *Five Variations on a Theme. Interest Aggregation by Party Today*, 253.

Second, as political parties have to establish democratic elements in the inner party opinion forming process to enable all party members active participation, they also have to deal with other forces in a liberal democracy. Political parties are not the only power which plays an important role in the decision making process in a liberal democracy. Other groups, such as the media, interest groups, business groups, trade unions and nongovernmental organizations represent different parts of the society and can influence public opinion and support or prevent the transfer of party politics into practice. Thus, in order to implement its own politics, a political party has to deal with all kinds of interest groups. Even a political party with a strong ideological basis, such as the BJP has to accommodate its politics to make it acceptable for other influential parts of society.

Third, in order to gain executive power, a political party has to develop the ability to form coalitions with other political parties. This means that a political party has to bargain and to balance the interests of its electorate with what is negotiable with other parties. Thus, the ability of a political party to come to a compromise with other political parties is a precondition to gain executive power, especially in a multiparty system.

Thus, party politics is a result of a complex bargaining process. For a cultural ideological political party, such as the BJP, the overarching goal of this bargaining process is to transfer as much as possible of the core party identity, its ideology, into practical politics. As a first step, it is necessary to convince the core voter base of the ideology and to develop the ideology towards practical politics in order to make it suitable to the core voter base. As a second step, the development of the ideology must go further to gain support from collateral organizations. Following this, the party ideology is defined and major changes are unlikely. The next steps of the bargaining process will involve forces from the outside with less obvious bonds to the political party and its ideology. In a third step, a political party has to deal with other kinds of influential forces. The result of this bargaining process is not a change in party ideology but an adaptation of party politics to make them more acceptable to other forces and to gain support from other organizations and institutions. This pressure to adapt practical party

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politics is further revealed in the fourth step, the coalition building. If a political party is to gain executive power and build a coalition, it has to deal with other political parties. In contrast to other forces, these potential coalition partners fulfill the same functions and roles and pursue the same goals as any other political party. This makes the bargaining process more difficult because the claims by the electorate are high and political differences matter more and can destabilize a coalition. But, due to the fact that coalition partners can only gain power when they make compromises, the pressure to make compromises is high as seen in the case of the BJP when it came to power as part of a collation in 1999. Although the outcome of this bargaining process will probably further influence a party's behavior, it will not lead to a change in the party's ideology. But, the outcome is decisive for the politics of the executive when the coalition comes to govern the country. Coalition partners are mutually dependent. In order to stay in power, they have to stay on a course of compromise between the coalition partners.

2.   Politics of Nation-States

In order to explain the behavior of a state in the international realm, one can deal with different theories of international relations and their specific views of the international system and the influence of various factors on the behavior of a state. To explain the specific behavior of a domestic party when it comes to ruling a country, it is necessary to examine some aspects of international relations theory. For the purpose of this examination, it is sufficient to focus on the major factors which influence the behavior of any state, such as identity and interests of a state. Both factors are based on different theories of International Relations (identity – constructivism; interest – realism), but this distinction is not decisive for choosing these factors. Rather, it is to note that identity brings focus on domestic influences on state behavior and the interest factor focuses on the international aspects of state behavior.

a.   *The Question of Identity for a Nation-State*

The modern nation-state has its historical origins in Western Europe. One of these origins is the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. It marked the transition from a ruling system based on multiple overlapping feudal political authorities and a power struggle

between religious and secular powers to the development of states with sovereignty rights. Sovereignty means the exclusive right to exercise political authority over a given territory.[30] As Max Weber stated, the state evolved as "… a human community that (successfully) claims the *monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force* within a given territory.""[31] The integration of the nation and the state took place after the French Revolution when the idea that rulers and subordinates identified themselves as citizens of a common state took ground. According to Spruyt, "State building (the attempt to enhance the capacity to rule) and nation building (the attempt to construct a shared political identity among the subjects of that particular territorial state) thus went hand in hand."[32] Hence, the answer to the question of the identity of a nation is a precondition for defining the common ground of a nation state. Haas defines the nation-state as "… a political entity whose inhabitants consider themselves a single nation and wish to remain one." [33] National identity is, therefore, decisive for the bond and relationship between the state and its citizens, and the arrangement and recognition of personal rights and duties. According to Smith, "The appeal to national identity has become the main legitimation for social order and solidarity today."[34] Even in the age of globalization and the increasing importance of supranational organizations, the nation-state remains the basic unit of the international system. Likewise, national identity will retain its importance. As Smith argues, "A growing cosmopolitanism does not in itself entail the decline of nationalism; the rise of regional culture areas does not diminish the hold of national identities."[35]

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[30] For more details about the term *sovereignty* and its definitions, see Stephen D. Krasner. "Abiding Sovereignty," *International Political Science Review / Revue Internationale De Science Politique* 22, no. 3, Transformation of International Relations: Between Change and Continuity. Transformations des relations internationales: entre rupture et continuité (July 2001): 229-251.

[31] Max Weber, Hans Heinrich Gerth and Charles Wright Mills, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology. Translated, Edited, and with an Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), 78.

[32] Hendrik Spruyt, "The Origins, Development, and Possible Decline of the Modern State," *Annual Review of Political Science* 5 (2002), 133.

[33] Ernst B. Haas, *Nationalism, Liberalism, and Progress* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 23.

[34] Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1991), 16.

[35] Ibid., 175.

According to Wendt, the corporate identity of a nation-state still generates four basic interests:

> 1. Physical security, including its differentiation from other actors
>
> 2. Ontological security or predictability in relationships to the world, which creates a desire for stable social identities
>
> 3. Recognition as an actor by others, above and beyond survival through brute force
>
> 4. Development, in the sense of meeting the human aspiration for a better life, for which states are repositories at the collective level[36]

However, the term *identity* is not easy to define because it is used in diverse ways in social science and can refer to the individual or to a collective. Additionally, individuals and groups do not have one single identity. Every individual is composed of multiple identities and so is any group. Which identity is dominant can vary over time and from individual to individual, based on their changing socio-political context. Therefore, the affiliation of an individual to a group with a collective identity can change over time as well. Additionally, in case of a nation-state the national identity is influenced by forces from different directions. According to Wendt, "Some state identities and interests stem primarily from relations to domestic society ("liberal," "democratic"), others from international society ("hegemon," "balancer")."[37]

To make it even more complicated, collective identities also can change because they are based on social classifications that may be modified or abolished. National identity refers to the collective identity of a group which may influence the relationship of the group towards the nation state. Relevant features for a national identity are ethnicity, culture, history, traditions, myths, territory, and economy,[38] and with regard to international relations the position in the international system. But, as shown, national identity is not a static term but a complex and flexible construct with many facets. In any

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[36] Alexander Wendt, "Collective Identity Formation and the International State." *The American Political Science Review* 88, no. 2 (June 1994): 385.

[37] Ibid., 385.

[38] Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1991), 1-18.

case, coherence of the nation-state is decisive for a national identity. The internal coherence of a nation-state is explained in three ways: According to Kowert, the nation-state "(1) satisfied the needs of individuals; (2) satisfied the needs of powerful social groups; and (3) is the culmination of large social processes that neither individuals nor groups can control." [39]

A nation-state has to deal with such various disparities to define a national identity. Major changes in a national identity could endanger the existence of that nation-state. A contested national identity may lead to tensions in the state, increase the danger of factionalism along fault lines of different identities, produce separatist movements and riots and can lead to a breakdown of the state. According to Eder, "The state remains, albeit in a scaled-down version. It is the nation that is problematized: the cultural unity and homogeneity which served as its raison d'être … Where established social identities, institutions, and practices of politics appear to falter, identities are ethnicized, and mobilized to replace them."[40] Hence, a national identity, however defined, is a precondition for the existence of a national state and a stable democracy. Especially for states with a federal political system in which power is distributed to different levels, a common national identity (in form of a *Staatsvolk*) is a necessary precondition in order to ensure a stable nation-state.[41] Creating and preserving a national identity is, therefore, a task for the political leaders of a country to ensure coherence of their nation-state. This is especially important in a diverse state such as India with its different cultures, ethnics, languages and religions. If, in the case of India, a Hindu nationalistic party as the BJP tried to establish a national identity dominated by Hinduism, it would exclude major parts of the society and endanger the national unity and stability of the nation-state.

[39] Paul A. Kowert, "National Identity: Inside and Out" In *The Origins of National Interests*, eds. Glenn R. Chafetz, Michael Spirtas and Benjamin Frankel (London: F. Cass, 1999), 7.

[40] Klaus Eder, *Collective Identities in Action: A Sociological Approach to Ethnicity* (Aldershot, Hampshire, England: Ashgate, 2002), 1.

[41] Brendan O'Leary, "What States can do with Nations: An Iron Law of Nationalism and Federation?" In *The Nation-State in Question*, eds. T. V. Paul, G. John Ikenberry and John A. Hall (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 51-78.

b.   *The Question of Interests for a State*

Interest-based approaches in the theory of international relations focus on the behavior of nation-states in the international realm. The main focus of nation-states is to preserve their own survival against any threat from the outside or inside. But, it is not enough to ensure the pure existence of a territorial entity. As shown, the notion of a state is closely tied to sovereignty and the unchallenged right to control the territory of that state. Sovereignty of the state is the condition sine qua non for the existence of a state. To ensure the survival of the state means to ensure the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state.

How best to protect the sovereignty of the state is disputed in international theory.[42] For example, if the assumption is made that the international system is based on anarchy, then it is best to try to gain more relative power in comparison to other states to ensure superiority over possible opponents. Defensive realists would then argue that a state could be satisfied with this kind of relative superiority that ensured sovereignty of its own state and preserved its status in the international system.[43] In contrast to this, supporters of offensive realism argue that nation-states have the goal of gaining more power (e.g., by conquering other nation-states) and improving their status in the international system. Mearsheimer argues that "the ultimate goal of every great power is to maximize its share of world power and eventually dominate the system,"[44] in other words, to become a hegemon. In this sense, becoming a hegemon is the best way to increase the state's security and preserve the sovereignty of the nation-state. Once a hegemon, nation-states have to face different challenges, from rising countries, for example, which may lead to a decline of the hegemon. Structural realists argue that "…

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[42] A broad overview about theories of international relations is given by Stephen M. Walt. "International Relations: One World, Many Theories." *Foreign Policy* no. 110, Special Edition: Frontiers of Knowledge (Spring 1998): 29-46.

[43] See as examples for defensive realists: Jervis, Robert. "Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma." *World Politics* 30, no. 2 (January 1978): 167-214. For the discussion between classical realism and neorealism or structural realism see Robert G. Gilpin. "The Richness of the Tradition of Political Realism." *International Organization* 38, no. 2 (Spring 1984): 287-304. As an example for the discussion between offensive and defensive realism see James W., Jr. Davis, Bernard I. Finel, Stacie E. Goddard, Stephen Van Evera, Charles L. Glaser, and Chaim Kaufmann. "Taking Offense at Offense-Defense Theory." *International Security* 23, no. 3 (Winter 1998): 179-206.

[44] John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: Norton, 2001), 4.

in their twilight years great powers try to arrest or reverse their decline."[45] This may lead to a hegemonic war initiated by the hegemon or the rising rival.[46]

But, even if the question of sovereignty is the fundamental question for the existence of a state, it is not the only one. Due to globalization, nation-states now face a dilemma: they have to partly renounce sovereignty rights in order to gain specific advantages by joining supranational institutions, organizations or regimes. The economic world order is no longer determined by nation-states alone. Stiglitz argues that we have instead "… a system that might be called *global governance without global government*, one in which a few institutions – the World Bank, the IMF, the WTO – and few players – the finance, commerce, and trade ministries, closely linked to certain financial and commercial interests – dominate the scene, but in which many of those affected by their decisions are left almost voiceless."[47]

Additionally, nation-states have to face the fact that even if their formal sovereignty is untouched, their effective sovereignty is partly limited. To stay competitive in a globalized market and prevent the migration of labor, nation-states have to make concessions to globally operating companies or to national industries. Therefore, they are de facto less sovereign than they seem to be. The scale of losses of sovereignty rights depends on the willingness of any individual nation-state to relinquish rights, and on the individual circumstances of the nation-state that might dictate the necessity to

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[45] Kenneth N. Waltz, "The Emerging Structure of International Politics," *International Security* 18, no. 2 (Autumn 1993), 49.

[46] With regard to rising China, Mearsheimer gives a good example of the thoughts of proponents of offensive realism in John J. Mearsheimer. "Better to be Godzilla than Bambi." *Foreign Policy* no. 146 (January-February 2005): 47-48. Additionally, Robert G. Gilpin. "The Theory of Hegemonic War." *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 18, no. 4, The Origin and Prevention of Major Wars (Spring 1988): 591-613 shows in more detail how states can rise and decline in the hierarchies of states, becoming hegemons, and try to defend their position by a so called "hegemonic war."

[47] Joseph E. Stiglitz, *Globalization and its Discontents* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2002), 21-22.

hand over rights. In any case, these losses of sovereignty do not lead per se to a loss of status as a nation-state because every nation-state has, in principle, to deal with this trend.[48]

The discussion about sovereignty rights makes clear that the preservation of sovereignty in all areas of politics is not an aim per se for the nation-state. According to structural realists, the overarching goal for a nation-state is to preserve or to increase its relative power in comparison to potential opponents because this power increases its national security. The question of power is, therefore, sometimes, or in some political areas, dominant over the question of full sovereignty. This is most obvious in the case of economic power. **First**, economic strength or industrial capacity is often combined with military power. A prosperous economy enables a nation-state to maintain a strong military power. **Second**, economic strength gives a nation-state the opportunity to gain more influence in supranational organizations or over other nation-states. This means that an economically strong nation-state is able to gain a position of superiority in the international realm and increase its own security by joining a supranational organization or institution and herewith accepting a loss of sovereignty. In contrast to this, economic underdevelopment could mean a loss of relative power and could lead, in consequence, to a security threat. Besides military power, economic strength is, therefore, one important factor for the national power of a state. Other elements of national power are population, national character, national morale, the quality of diplomacy and the quality of government.[49]

With reference to these elements of national power, even realists deal with questions of identity (the national character) and build the connection between domestic issues (national morale) and international politics. For Morgenthau, national character and national morale "… stand out both for their elusiveness from the point of rational

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[48] For more details about the question of sovereignty and the discussion about the continuing importance of sovereignty for nation-states see Stephen D. Krasner. "Abiding Sovereignty." International Political Science Review / Revue Internationale De Science Politique 22, no. 3, Transformation of International Relations: Between Change and Continuity. Transformations des relations internationales: entre rupture et continuité (July 2001): 229-251. And, Stephen D. Krasner. "Sovereignty." Foreign Policy no. 122 (January–February 2001): 20-29.

[49] Hans Joachim Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations; the Struggle for Power and Peace*, 5th [rev. and reset ed. (New York; distributed by Random House, 1972: Knopf, 1973), 112-164.

prognosis and for their permanent and often decisive influence upon the weight a nation is able to put into the scale of international politics."[50] In the sense of Morgenthau, the national character of a nation is relatively stable and long-lasting, therefore, it is predictable for other nation-states. The problem for other nation-states is less the entire national character of another national state, but which of the different facets of a national character of a national-state will dominate. In contrast to this, national morale is per se unstable and, therefore, very unpredictable.

This discussion about power and interest of a nation-state shows that foreign policy is not independent of domestic policy. Moreover, policy has to take into consideration not only rational elements of power, but also factors that may seem to be irrational.

One important factor is the policy of prestige which has been critical for the BJP as it has presented itself as a party of national honor. According to Weber, the influence and importance of prestige is hard to measure, "… but it is very obvious. The realm of 'honor,' which is comparable to the 'status order' within a social structure, pertains also to the interrelations of political structures."[51] This means that the recognition of a nation-state by other nation-states, or its reputation for power, is an important factor for influencing the international politics of a nation-state. Or, as Morgenthau argues: "The policy of prestige has two possible ultimate objectives: prestige for its own sake or, much more frequently, prestige in support of a policy of the status quo or of imperialism."[52] Most often, a policy of prestige is a substitute for a loss of hard power. In this case, prestige ensures the nation-state the recognition and the status of its powerful history. For a nation-state, this could be important for domestic reasons in order to keep national morale high and ensure the support of the public. Thus, although a policy of prestige appears at first view to be irrational, it is, with its link to the national morale of a state, rational and quite in the interest of a state.

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[50] Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations; the Struggle for Power and Peace*, 128.

[51] Weber, Gerth and Mills, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology. Translated, Edited, and with an Introduction*, 160.

[52] Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations; the Struggle for Power and Peace,* 80-81.

c.   Conclusion

The discussion about the different elements of power shows a link between the policy of prestige, national morale and its influence on the power of a state. It makes clear that facets of national identity are inseparably connected with aspects of national power. Questions of national identity are an integral part of power politics. Therefore, questions about the national interests of a nation-state include also, in a broader sense, questions about national identity and aspects of the domestic politics of a nation-state. Additionally, elements of national interests may influence the national identity of a state and can shape it over time. With this, aspects of national identity and of national interest influence each other in different ways; they are two sides of the same coin.

For a government based on a party with a strong party ideology, such as the BJP in India, this interaction of national identity and national interest has several practical implications. **First,** even if party ideology puts the focus on specific parts of national identity, such as ethnicity or religion, the transfer into practice is limited by the ability of a nation to change its identity. An ideology which excludes major parts of the society will endanger the coherence of the nation and may endanger the future of the nation-state. **Second**, especially in diverse societies, the foreign policy of a nation-state has to consider the national identity of that nation-state. In a liberal democracy, any foreign policy which does not consider national identity would endanger the coherence of the nation-state and could, therefore, endanger the power of the ruling political party. This means that party ideology is less decisive for the foreign policy of a liberal democracy if this ideology is not an integral part of the national identity. If, for example, the Hindu nationalistic ideology of the BJP finds no common ground in India's society, it could not dominate foreign policy because this would endanger the coherence of the nation-state. **Third**, nation-states are today more interconnected and dependent on each other. Domestic politics has an influence on the perception of a nation-state by other nation-states and can influence their stance and behavior towards each other. Therefore, even domestic politics on the national level has to consider the possible perception of other nation-states. Increasing nationalism in a nation-state is a source of worry for other

states, and therefore for international cooperation. Especially in developing countries, such as India, the possible influence of nationalism on politics has to be limited in order to avoid exclusion by the international community and to further ensure the influx of foreign capital. **Fourth**, in comparison to the past, the position of a nation-state in the international realm is not defined only by hard power, but more by soft power and good diplomacy. To strengthen national morale, a government relies less on a demonstration of hard power and more on good diplomacy to increase its prestige and national morale. So, a Hindu nationalistic government also may utilize soft power to demonstrate national strength and power without neglecting its nationalistic ideology or endangering national identity.

B.   DEMOCRACY IN INDIA

Democracies are organized and run in various ways. Lijphart identifies ten differences and differentiates broadly between two dimensions of differences and explains how these differences in principle shape politics.[53] The first dimension focuses on the characteristics of the arrangement of executive power, the party, the electoral system, and interest groups. The second dimension puts emphasis on the contrast between federalism and unitary government. For the purpose of this examination it is not necessary to follow Lijphart's analysis of the "quality of democracies" in detail. But, his examination makes clear that rules, regulations and institutions of a democracy shape the political system, the party system, and herewith, the behavior of political parties inside the system. Therefore, to understand and explain the BJP party s behavior, it is necessary to examine the foundations and fundamental patterns of India's democracy.[54]

Examining the foundation of India's democracy means going back to India's independence phase and analyzing the basic ideas of the Indian nation-state. With regard to the character of the BJP as a Hindu nationalistic party, it is sufficient to focus on an

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[53] Arend Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 351.

[54] For the purpose of this examination, it is not necessary to distinguish different approaches to the study of parties and party systems. It is sufficient to mention the different influences of identities, institutions, rules etc. on parties and party systems. For more details see: Pradeep K. Chhibber and Ken Kollman, *The Formation of National Party Systems: Federalism and Party Competition in Canada, Great Britain, India, and the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 276.

analysis of the relationship of the Indian nation-state towards religion and Hinduism in principle, and examine how this relationship shaped the construction of India's democracy. In addition, it is necessary to examine the major principles of India's political system because they provide the framework for the country's political parties and their behavior.

1.   The Idea of an Indian Nation-State and an Indian Nation

At independence, one of the major tasks for the Indian National Congress (INC) was to build a nation by defining a national Indian identity. Yet, the direction of the new Indian nation state was not undisputed within the INC. According to Graham, "In 1947 it contained within its ranks representatives of three important intellectual groups with quite definite but divergent views of what form the new polity should take. Of these, the first wished to see India as a liberal-democratic state with a constitution that was both secular and parliamentary in character; the second hoped for the formation of a socialist state in which collectivist principles governed social and economic organization; and the third was working to realize a state which embodied Hindu traditions and values."[55] At last, the considerations of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru were imposed on the formation of the Indian nation-state.

Gandhi wanted to create a nation based on tolerance. He rejected any kind of nationalism based on history and preferred instead the higher values of morality composed of elements from different traditions and religions. Khilnani describes Gandhi's idea as follows: "With unique sensitivity, he evoked a patriotic symbolism that allowed him to be visualized not merely as an all-Indian leader among the nationalist elite but as a local saint in the different regions and communities of India."[56] According to Brass, Nehru's idea was to create a modern India with the cornerstones of: "sovereignty, unity, order, a strong state, secularism, democracy and parliamentarism, economic self-

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[55] Bruce D. Graham, *Hindu Nationalism and Indian Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 5.

[56] Sunil Khilnani, *The Idea of India* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1989), 165.

sufficiency and the need for social and economic reform."[57] Hansen adds that the new modern India was to be created on the basis of a common history of tolerance. "To Nehru, India was spirituality and a concomitant plurality and tolerance – which had eroded and degenerated from a golden Upanishadic Age to contemporary disarray – versus a materialist, individualized West."[58]

For Nehru, it became clear that an Indian nation state had a prosperous future only if it were to overcome the division of different cultures, religions, ethnicities and languages. Therefore, tolerance was a necessary means to ensure the independence and unity of the Indian nation and to form a national identity. According to Adeney, for Nehru, it was clear that in the long run, identities "… whether based on language, religion, or caste, were assumed to fade away with the onset of modernization."[59] Therefore, the Indian state was formed as a liberal democracy with a constitution which ensured human rights and the freedom of religion.[60]

But, the transfer to practice was, in part, not as clear as it seems on the first view. The term "secular" did not appear in the original Indian constitution. Only after 1976, did it become part of the constitution because secularism is not the same as tolerance. This is due to the fact that India's secularism differs from the Western understanding of secularism. Gandhi's and Nehru's understanding of a secular state meant that the state had to be neutral in religious issues, yet it did not mean to separate the state from religion. The common Western understanding of a secular state often means that a state prevents any influence of religion on state affairs; in other words, a clear separation of state and religion.

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[57] Paul R. Brass, *The Politics of India since Independence* (Cambridge England: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 10.

[58] Thomas Blom Hansen, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 68.

[59] Katharine Adeney, *Federalism and Ethnic Conflict Regulation in India and Pakistan* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 92.

[60] With regard to temporarily tendencies at India's center toward authoritarianism, Ayesha Jalal. *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia:: A Comparative and Historical Perspective.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) questions the notion of India as a substantive democracy because of a "… lack of equitable or effective representation of constituent units at the centre …" lbid., 199-200. She concludes "…That the combination of structural constraints is less formidable in India offers no guarantee that its state managers will demonstrate more political will and imagination than their counterparts in Pakistan in accommodating multiple identities and regionally articulated aspirations." Lbid., 200.

This distinction between the Western understanding of secularism and India's way of secularism is not just academic, but has consequences for political practice and the definition of an Indian identity. In India, this became obvious in the general debate about the term "Hindutva"[61] and its importance for Hindu nationalists, as well as in the discussion about the representation of Muslims and Sikhs, and the status of the states of Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir. Although Article 25[62] of the Constitution of India guarantees freedom of religion and together with Article 26[63] determines India as a secular state, it emphasizes the special position Hinduism has in India.

Nehru and his supporters (especially the "father" of the constitution, Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, a scheduled caste leader) built the constitution on the understanding of the tolerance of Hinduism and the belief that religion in India would not be dogmatic and would be a cornerstone of Indian society. According to Granville "Indians generally, and the Constituent Assembly members no less, believed that these attributes were both a historical truth and a continuing source of the nation's strength, and they naturally applied them to constitution-making." [64] In this sense, all religions were equal and had equal rights. But, Hinduism was considered not just a religion, but a way of life. With this, Hinduism cannot be excluded from the state or from politics. With this

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[61] See Chapter III, A-3 of this thesis regarding Hindutva.

[62] Article 25 of Indian constitution: "**Freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion.—**(1) Subject to public order, morality and health and to the other provisions of this Part, all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practise and propagate religion. (2) Nothing in this article shall affect the operation of any existing law or prevent the State from making any law — (*a*) regulating or restricting any economic, financial, political or other secular activity which may be associated with religious practice; (*b*) providing for social welfare and reform or the throwing open of Hindu religious institutions of a public character to all classes and sections of Hindus. *Explanation I.*—The wearing and carrying of *kirpans* shall be deemed to be included in the profession of the Sikh religion. *Explanation II* .—In sub-clause (*b*) of clause (2) , the reference to Hindus shall be construed as including a reference to persons professing the Sikh, Jaina or Buddhist religion, and the reference to Hindu religious institutions shall be construed accordingly."

[63] Article 26 of Indian constitution: " **Freedom to manage religious affairs.—** Subject to public order, morality and health, every religious denomination or any section thereof shall have the right—(*a*) to establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes; (*b*) to manage its own affairs in matters of religion; (*c*) to own and acquire movable and immovable property; and (*d*) to administer such property in accordance with law." In addition to this, Article 27 and 28 contain some additional minor regulations regarding religion. Article 27: "**Freedom as to payment of taxes for promotion of any particular religion**." Article 28: "**Freedom as to attendance at religious instruction or religious worship in certain educational institutions."**

[64] Granville Austin, *The Indian Constitution: Cornerstone of a Nation* (Clarendon Press: 1966), 390.

understanding of secularism and Hinduism, it is comprehensible that the Indian constitution mentioned, in Article 25 especially, religious Hindu institutions which guaranteed the freedom of religion. But, because of the character of Hinduism as tolerant and non-missionary, Hinduism is, in the opinion of the majority of the Hindus, per se, secular. According to Hansen "The dominant interpretation of secularism in India did not entail the removal of religion from the political sphere, but rather the belief that religion and culture were elevated to an ostensibly apolitical level, above the profanities of the political."[65]

With this, the constitution laid ipso facto the basis for the debate about the role of Hinduism for the Indian nation, for its national identity, and for a discussion about the answer to the question, who is an Indian? And, it made the freedom of religious practice dependent on the future character of Hinduism. If Hinduism changes towards intolerance, the constitution of India might not be able to ensure the protection of religious minorities.

In addition to this, the protection of minorities, by article 29[66] and 30[67] of the constitution, is as well ambiguous. Chatterjee argues that the difficulty is "… that the formal institutions of the state, based on an undifferentiated concept of citizenship, cannot allow for the separate representation of minorities. Consequently, the question of who represents minorities remains problematic, and constantly threatens the tenuous identity of nation and state."[68] As a legacy of partition, the Indian constitution ensures the protection of minorities in order to prevent riots, but it does not allow any special self-

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[65] Hansen, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India*, 11.

[66] Article 29 of Indian constitution: "**Protection of interests of minorities .—** (1) Any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same. (2) No citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the State or receiving aid out of State funds on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any of them."

[67] Article 30 of Indian constitution **"Right of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions.** — (1) All minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice. (1A) In making any law providing for the compulsory acquisition of any property of an educational institution established and administered by a minority, referred to in clause (1), the State shall ensure that the amount fixed by or determined under such law for the acquisition of such property is such as would not restrict or abrogate the right guaranteed under that clause. (2) The State shall not, in granting aid to educational institutions, discriminate against any educational institution on the ground that it is under the management of a minority, whether based on religion or language."

[68] Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 112.

governing rights for religious groups, e.g., in Jammu and Kashmir. According to Adeney, the reason was the Indian strategy of nation building "… which perceived self-governing rights for religious communities to be problematic because of the perceived danger of secession: a legacy of partition."[69]

In a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic state as India, such an inconsistent constitutional construct raises questions and is the source of grievances. For example, Hindu nationalists question the status of the special autonomy rights of the state of Jammu and Kashmir and argue that these are, in fact, special religious rights for the Muslim majority in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. For Hindu nationalists, these special rights are an example of pseudo-secularism. On the other hand, the emphasis of Hinduism in the constitution is a source of grievances for religious minorities, a constant threat for their exercise of religion in India, and a hampering of the development of an Indian identity beyond any religion.

As long as India is ruled by a strong party or party coalition on the national level, able to tie all social groups (including minorities) together and ensure adequate representation of all groups in the political process, these faults in the construction of India's constitution will not have any major effect. But, in times when the state and the government are weak and if political entrepreneurs decide to exploit these fault lines for their own gain, it offers the opportunities for an escalation of grievances to agitations and political unrest and can destabilize the Indian nation.

The principal course for India to deal with its diverse society can be defined as a politics of recognition.[70] One cornerstone of this politics was to establish a federal system in India. In comparison to other countries, India's grade of federalism is one of the highest.[71] The reason for the creation of a federal system was to find a way of recognizing the plurality of different (linguistic, religious and ethnic) regional identities on the Indian subcontinent and integrating them in order to build a national identity. Yet,

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[69] Adeney, *Federalism and Ethnic Conflict Regulation in India and Pakistan*, 110.

[70] See, Ulrich Schneckener, "Models of Ethnic Conflict Regulation: The Politics of Recognition," *Managing and Settling Ethnic Conflicts: Perspectives on Successes and Failures in Europe, Africa and Asia*, eds. Ulrich Schneckener and Stefan Wolff (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 18-39.

[71] See Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*, 313.

adopting a federal system in principle contains three challenges. **First** it leads to the discussion about the distribution of power between the center and the states. This discussion can lead to conflict between the central authorities, who want to preserve a strong central power, and the states who want to strengthen their influence and increase political autonomy.[72] **Second**, especially in multi-ethnic countries, this debate is combined with a discussion about specific (minority) rights for the states in order to preserve their local identities. This discussion is not just a discussion about local identity, but as well a debate about the importance of local identities in comparison to a national identity and can lead to the desire to separate a state from the union. However, data of Bermeo shows that despite the inherent conflicts, a federal system lessens the conditions that might spark violence between different ethnic groups. And, that no "… violent separatist movement has ever succeeded in a federal democracy."[73] But, the reason for this is less the federal system itself than the overarching interest of the nation-state to ensure territorial integrity. The center can ensure territorial integrity and the stability of the federal system by a policy of inclusion to manage ethnic or religious diversity or by force.[74] **Third**, a federal system in a diverse society can increase the tendency to fragmentation, regionalization and factionalism if the different groups of the society are able to mobilize enough supporters to form a single party.[75] Therefore, a federal system will enhance the necessity of coalition building but also reduce the probability of forming

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[72] For more detail about this conflict in India, see the analysis of Atul Kohli, *Democracy and Discontent: India's Growing Crisis of Governability* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 420.For details about the relationship between the center and the states and the resulting bargaining process between these two, see: James Manor, "Center-State Relations," *The Success of India's Democracy*, ed. Atul Kohli (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 78-102.

[73] Nancy Bermeo, "The Import of Institutions," *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 2 (2002), 108.

[74] See Adeney, *Federalism and Ethnic Conflict Regulation in India and Pakistan*, 107-136.

[75] Subrata K. Mitra, "Federalism's Success," in *The State of India's Democracy*, eds. Sumit Ganguly, Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 89-106, shows that the principles of federalism are deeply rooted in India's society.

a stable government. India's federal system leads to a high number of political parties which operate partly just on the state level, and lessen the executive power of the centre.[76]

According to Castells, "… a complex geometry emerges in the relationship between the state, social classes, social groups, and identities present in civil society."[77] The mentioned challenges of discussions and conflicts about the role and the relationship between the central authority and the states and discussions about the importance of local and national identities are, in principle, an integral part of any federal system. Any federal government has therefore to develop adequate institutions and mechanisms to manage these discussions and conflicts. And, additionally, it needs a strong and stable central government to preserve the unity of the federal system without harming minorities. Unfortunately, the federal system does not support the formation of such a strong and stable government at the center.

The Indian constitution, as the basis of the country's federal system, tries to balance the various identities of Indian society. To prevent a development of religious identities on the state level, state boundaries were drawn in India along lines of linguistic boundaries. This was the main principle during India's reorganizations in 1956, 1966 and 2000.[78] Furthermore, the constitution puts the focus on creating a strong central government and the build up of a common national identity. But, it shows some flaws by neglecting the establishment of institutions and mechanisms to balance conflicts between the center and the states. In addition to this, it offers the executive authority the opportunity to override the constitution. This led, in the case of Jammu and Kashmir, to a de facto abolition of article 370 (which offers the State of Jammu and Kashmir special autonomy rights).

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[76] Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*, 312 -313 shows that in comparison with other nation-states India has one of the highest numbers of parliamentary parties and a less revealed executive power of the center.

[77] Manuel Castells, *The Power of Identity* (Malden: Blackwell, 2004), 333.

[78] Jyotirindra Dasgupta, "India's Federal Design and Multicultural National Construction," *The Success of India's Democracy*, ed. Atul Kohli (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 49-77.

India is an "Electoral Democracy"[79] with a democratic tradition since its independence in 1947. But this modern democratic state is only one side of the coin in India's political system. The other side is marked by the limited downward reach of the state. But, most important, is the political society in India. Kohli argues that "Indian nationalists leaders mobilized various social classes into politics, which pushed a limited colonial state into a reactive mode. This modern but limited state was India's fragmented-multiclass state in the making, the product of both colonial state construction and pressures from Indians, especially the nationalist elite."[80] The result of this construction was a limited state capacity in combination with a relatively poor bureaucracy. Even when India's democracy had proven its stability, democracy showed its vulnerability and dependence on individual actors and their political behavior. This offers a target for Hindu nationalist forces to challenge the central government by starting campaigns such as the campaign in Ayodhya and gave the BJP the opportunity to gain political advantages in the Hindu heartland.

2. India's Political System

India is the largest democracy in the world. Its constitution provides human and minority rights, freedom of religion, and ensures free and fair elections. India's political system follows the example set by the political system of Great Britain. India's parliament consists of the Council of States or Rajya Sabha and the People's Assembly or Lok Sabha. The Rajya Sabha is a body consisting of not more than 250 members up to twelve of whom are appointed by the president. The remainder is chosen by the elected members of the state and territorial assemblies. The members serve for a six-year term. The Lok Sabha has 545 seats. Two members of the Lok Sabha are appointed by the president. Five hundred and forty three are elected by popular vote in 543 constituencies by a first-past-the-post-system. The members serve for five-year terms. Chief of the state is the President. He is elected by an electoral college consisting of elected members of

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[79] Larry Diamond, "Thinking about Hybrid Regimes," *Essential Readings in Comparative Politics*, eds. Patrick H. O'Neil and Ronald Rogowski (New York: Norton, 2006), 186-187.

[80] Atul Kohli, *State-Directed Development: Political Power and Industrialization in the Global Periphery* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 228.

both houses of Parliament and the legislatures of the states for a five-year term. Chief of the government is the Prime Minister. He is chosen by the members of Parliament (Lok Sabha) after the legislative elections. The cabinet is appointed by the President on the recommendation of the Prime Minister.

The political constellation of India differs from the political constellation in Western democracies. Political parties in India have been dominated mainly by political dynasties or interest groups. Inner party democracy is widely uncommon. The construction of and development towards a relatively weak state in India is combined with a highly competitive political party system. Elections are decided by the first-past-the post system. Decisive for the success of a party in this system is just the number of votes a candidate receives in a district in comparison to his or her competitors. Only a few parties are represented in all India. Most parties represent individual groups of the society or have just a regional basis. In the 2004 Lok Sabha elections, 230 parties were recognized, of that were six national parties and fifty-one state parties.[81] To win elections and be successful in such a system is just possible if a party is able to mobilize masses of people. In the case of India, this often means consolidating and mobilizing groupings along cultural, ethnic or linguistic lines. Party identity is therefore often a means to mobilize voters and a precondition for party success in elections on the state level.[82] As a result, the Lok Sabha consists of over forty parties and is highly fragmented.[83] The emphasis of party identity along fault lines of society in combination with India's federal system has led to a diversification of the political party system in India and strengthens the division of society.[84] Or, according to Sridharan and Varshney, "Together, the

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[81] A table of the development of parties involved in the Lok Sabha elections is given in Adeney, *Federalism and Ethnic Conflict Regulation in India and Pakistan*, 127.

[82] Lawrence Sáez, *Federalism without a Center: The Impact of Political and Economic Reform on India's Federal System* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2002), 43-70 shows the increasing number of regional political parties on the state level. See also M. V. Rajeev Gowda and E. Sridharan, "Parties and the Party System, 1947-2006" In *The State of India's Democracy*, eds. Sumit Ganguly, Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 3-25.

[83] Despite the high number of parties, Chhibber and Kollman, *The Formation of National Party Systems: Federalism and Party Competition in Canada, Great Britain, India, and the United States* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 44 show that the average number of parties in the districts is relatively low. This means that most of the parties run just in a few districts and represent only regional groups of society. This leads to the mentioned fragmentation.

[84] Ibid., 199-208.

diversity and institutional features of the polity have created an increasingly plural-but not sharply polarized-party system at the national level. They have also led to a wide and often confusing array of political parties."[85]

Several reasons were supportive of this trend towards regionalism.[86] Besides the decline of the Congress and the rising self-consciousness of marginalized groups[87], the economic reforms of 1991 led to a sustainable rise in the multiparty system in India. In principle, they affected the power distribution between the center and the states in India by reducing the role of the national government in the economy. Therefore, industrial development and the shift of responsibility to the individual states marked a major shift in Indian federalism.[88] The center lost power and the periphery gained power.

This fragmentation in combination with a trend towards regionalism has led to the fact that most parties do not focus on national interests. Rather, their emphasis lies on representation of regional, sectoral or group interests. To gain political power in the states, group identities become more important than a national identity. Thus, domestic issues in India are predominant. Under these circumstances, forming a stable government by building a majority coalition is very difficult. Parties in India, which wanted to have a real chance in power participation had to win the support of different social groups, make compromises, and build coalitions. State politics became more important for political

[85] E. Sridharan and Ashutosh Varshney, "Toward Moderate Pluralism: Political Parties in India" In *Political Parties and Democracy*, eds. Larry Diamond and Richard Gunther (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 207.

[86] Paranjoy Guha Thakurta and Shankar Raghuraman, *Divided we Stand. India in a Time of Coalitions* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2008), 39-71 give an overview of the process of fragmentation. See also Sudha Pai, "Parliamentary Elections in Contemporary India. Breakdown of the Dominant Party System and Ascendary of Regional Parties" In *Class, Ideology and Political Parties in India*, eds. Arun K. Jana and Bhupen Sarmah (Colorado Springs: International Academic Publishers LTD, 2002), 62-76.

[87] See Christophe Jaffrelot, "Caste and the Rise of Marginalized Groups" in *The State of India's Democracy*, eds. Sumit Ganguly, Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 66-85. Additionally Soumitra De, "Congress and the New Political Compulsions in India: The Resilience of a Centrist Party in a Polycentric Polity" in *Class, Ideology and Political Parties in India*, eds. Arun K. Jana and Bhupen Sarmah (Colorado Springs: International Academic Publishers LTD, 2002), 140-163 gives an overview about the connection between the decline of the Congress and the emergence of marginalized groups.

[88] Chhibber and Kollman, *The Formation of National Party Systems: Federalism and Party Competition in Canada, Great Britain, India, and the United States* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 139. See also page 199-208. See also Sáez, *Federalism without a Center: The Impact of Political and Economic Reform on India's Federal System*, 135-163.

parties. Political parties focus more on the situation of the individual state in order to participate in power. Small parties fill key positions in single states by establishing strong regional voter bases. Major parties which contest nation-wide have to adjust their behavior according to the public opinion of individual states in order to gain votes in the various states. Additionally, they are often dependent on smaller coalition partners in order to gain power in a state or to participate in power over a state.[89]

The discussed development of India's democracy and its party system shows the increasing difficulties in building social consensus and forming a stable government on the national level. But, according to Gowda, the effects of fragmentation have not been only negative. "This fragmentation of the party system from Congress dominance to multiparty coalition governments in India's regionalized and 'ethnicized' party system has not undermined the basic power-sharing character of the system, and has thus helped to consolidate democracy."[90] Today, power sharing and the bargaining process for political goals is not only an internal matter of a single party but part of public discourse between different political parties. Additionally, coalition politics in India is maturing. Thakurta argues, "Coalitions, in spite of their ideological contradictions, are perhaps better equipped to deal with the tensions of such a divided society than single party governments that have a tendency to centralize and homogenize."[91] For instance, this has forced the BJP to accommodate its Hindu-nationalistic behavior when ruling India as senior partner of a coalition.

However, India's democracy shows some flaws when transferring democratic processes into political practice. Kohli mentions that "Personal rule has replaced party rule at all levels – national, state, and district. Below the rulers, the entrenched civil and police services have been politicized."[92] This judgment of the year 1990 is still true today. Political practice in India is often dominated by a patronage system and populism. Coalitions were not formed along the ideological orientation of political parties, but by

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[89] Sridharan and Varshney, *Toward Moderate Pluralism: Political Parties in India*, 206-237.

[90] Gowda and Sridharan, *Parties and the Party System, 1947-2006*, 21.

[91] Thakurta and Raghuraman, *Divided we Stand. India in a Time of Coalitions*, 21.

[92] Kohli, *Democracy and Discontent: India's Growing Crisis of Governability*, 3.

the promise of advantages and special incentives.[93] Political decisions often followed the interests of some influential groups but not the necessities of the majority of the population or of the nation-state. The main problem in India's democracy is still corruption. India's Corruption Perceptions Index for 2008 is 3.4. Herewith, India ranks 85 out of 180 countries.[94] Transparency International India showed, in a 2005 study, that corruption in India was widespread and common in all parts of public services.[95]

In addition to the problem of corruption, India's democracy has to face additional problems. The Fund for Peace (a research and educational organization that works to prevent war and alleviate the conditions that cause war) argues that India is an effective democracy, but mentioned the police and the judiciary as sources for grievances. "The police have developed a reputation for corruption and have been accused of human rights violations. However, accountability is expected to improve with reforms. With a large population, insufficient funding, and lack of coordination, it is difficult for the judiciary to administer justice quickly enough. The justice system has a backlog of an estimated two million cases, many of which date back several years."[96] The poor reputation of the police and its propensity for corruption is a cause of worry. Because individual states are responsible for the police, a single state government, or a ruling political party can misuse the police for its own political purposes in the state without fearing a balancing central authority. In addition, Freedom House, an independent nongovernmental organization, argues that "Government effectiveness and accountability are also undermined by pervasive criminality in politics, decrepit state institutions, and widespread corruption."[97]

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[93] See also Gowda and Sridharan, *Parties and the Party System, 1947-2006*, 3-25.

[94] Transparency International, "2008 Corruption Perceptions Index," http://www.transparency.org/news_room/in_focus/2008/cpi2008/cpi_2008_table (accessed January 01, 2009).

[95] Transparency International India, "India Corruption Study 2005," http://www.transparencyindia.org/publication/India%20Corruption%20Study%202005%20in%20PDF.pdf (accessed January 01, 2009).

[96] The Fund For Peace, "Country Profile for India," http://www.fundforpeace.org/web/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=240&Itemid=383 (accessed January 01, 2009).

[97] Freedom House, "Map of Freedom in the World. Kashmir 2008," http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=363&year=2008&country=7531 (accessed January 01, 2009).

As we will show later in this thesis, these flaws in India's democracy helped the BJP to carry out the Ayodhya campaign and to impose Hindu nationalistic politics on the state level.

3.   Conclusion

In sum, the design and construction of India's democracy supports an ongoing discussion about the role and importance of Hinduism for the Indian nation. The constant discussions favor regional or ethnic politics in the states but oppose the development of a strong nationalistic Hinduism on the national level.

The mentioned framework of India's democracy has two major effects on the behavior of the BJP.

First, the inconsistent construction of India's constitution laid the basis for the debate about the character of Hinduism, its role for the Indian nation and for India's national identity. With regard to the constitution, a Hindu nationalistic party can argue in favor of a dominant role of Hinduism for the Indian nation-state and against minority rights. This could lead to a constant threat for the exercise of religion in India, and hamper the development of an Indian identity beyond any religion. The guarantee of minority rights and protection of religious freedom depends on a strong state and powerful state institution. But, India's federal system shifted power from the center to the states which make the center less able to guarantee minority rights. This means that a BJP government on the state level in Hindu nationalistic strongholds may more easily establish Hindu nationalistic policy because successful intervention of the center to ensure secularity in the states is less likely.

Second, India's federal system increases the tendency to fragmentation, regionalization and factionalism. Herewith, India's political system favors politics oriented towards group interests, leads to polarization, and endangers the unity of the society. In general, political parties react to this tendency by creating strong party identities and emphasizing these identities to overcome the heterogeneity of society and to form a stable voter base for the party. This general trend is valid for political parties on the state level. But, political parties on the national level have to develop a two-fold strategy. Even if they create a strong party identity to gain power on the regional level,

they have to act more moderately on the national level because the fragmentation leads to an enhanced necessity for coalition building. Herewith, the fragmentation of India's party system moderates the politics of the center, prevents extremist groups from coming into power and stabilizes democracy. Thus, in order to find coalition partners and to gain power on a national level or in states outside of the Hindu nationalistic strongholds, the BJP's politics has to be moderate.

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III.   HINDU NATIONALISM IN INDIA

In order to examine and to explain the BJP's behavior, it is necessary to examine the foundations of the BJP. This foundation consists of three elements. The first is the party ideology. As mentioned in this thesis, a party's ideology is decisive for the basic orientation of that political party. In case of the BJP, the party ideology is based on *Hindutva*, or Hinduness. But the term *Hindutva* as the foundation of the modern ideology of Hindu-nationalism cannot be understand without understanding the meaning of the basic term of *Hinduism* and its distinction from the term *Indian nationalism.* Therefore, the terms *Hinduism* and *Indian nationalism* will be explained first to set the stage for an understanding the Hindu nationalistic ideology of *Hindutva*.

The second basis for any party's behavior are collateral organizations which share a common basis with the political party and support the political party in exchange for gaining influence via the political parties. In case of the BJP, these collateral organizations are the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP). Together they comprise the Sangh Parivar or the Hindu nationalistic network. The examination of the RSS and the VHP focuses on the stance of these organizations towards religious issues and the relationship between religion and the state to show the general character of these organizations. The third basis for party behavior is the heritage of connected social organizations or political parties. The BJP emerged from the ashes of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS) when the party dissolved in 1979. Especially during the consolidation phase, the legacy of the BJS was decisive for the BJP. In sum, this chapter will explain the most relevant terms of Hindu nationalism and describe the Hindu Nationalist network in India to show the main Hindu political forces in India, their ties and connections, and their influence on the BJP.

A.   BASIC TERMS

1.   Hinduism

According to Oxtoby, "The term 'Hinduism' is largely a Western construct, a name given by outsiders to the majority religious heritage of the people of the Indian subcontinent."[98] This is one reason why defining Hinduism is not simple. The primary reason that Hinduism cannot be defined as easily is not only the term "Hinduism" but mainly the diversity and the non monotheistic character of Hinduism. In comparison to Christianity and Islam, Hinduism does not have a single founder. Instead, Hinduism developed in South Asia, over time, without any constraints of one overarching written scripture by a founder or an organization like the Christian church. Due to this fact, Hinduism is also very flexible. Also, it has a nonmissionary character. According to Stroup, Hindus do not proselytize. "Hinduism has taken over the centuries a "live and let live" attitude toward the question of who possesses the sole and final truth."[99] As a consequence, with this undogmatic and tolerant attitude, Hindus, over a long period of time, have not been able to develop a "collective Hindu consciousness."[100]

Hinduism's flexibility also allows influences of different races, cultures and religions. The foundation for Hinduism probably lies in the time before 1,500 B.C.. The Hindus themselves call Hinduism an ancient and eternal religion (*santana dharma*). This unspoiled religious basis was changed because of the influence of immigrating groups, firstly the Aryans who came to India around 1,500 B.C. Hinduism emerged in a process of constant adjustment and formed itself as a rich and complex mixture of beliefs, symbols and practical religious realization of rites, festivals and worship. This is the reason for the development of different sub-directions and schools of Hinduism. And, because Hinduism is not highly organized, people are free to choose their way of Hinduism and spirituality with broad variations.

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[98] Willard Gurdon Oxtoby, *World Religions: Eastern Traditions* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1996), 14.

[99] Herbert Hewitt Stroup, *Like a Great River; an Introduction to Hinduism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 49.

[100] Christophe Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 2.

With this freedom of choice and the existence of different schools of thought and Hindu philosophies and its lack of fundamentals, contradictions and ambivalence in the understanding and practicing of Hinduism are inherent. Therefore, talking about Hinduism means talking about general characterizations of Hinduism while neglecting the detailed specifics of different schools of belief. One must know that individual practice can be very different. And, even when it is difficult to define Hinduism, it is as well difficult to define who is a Hindu. According to Oxtoby, "The Hindu Family Act says that it applies to anyone who belongs to one of the Hindu 'denominations'… and 'to any other person domiciled in the territories to which (the) act extends who is *not a Muslim, Christian, Parsi or Jew by religion.*'"[101]

To find, in the sense of this examination, important characterizations of religious beliefs, practices and traditions of Hinduism, one has to go back to the time frame of 1,500 B.C. until 500 A.D. where most of the *Vedic* hymns (or hymns of the *Veda[102]*) were developed. The *Vedic* hymns are ritual texts which enclose the sacred and reveal basic knowledge (*Vedic* means knowledge) of Hinduism and were the first written source for standards, such as a code of conduct, of Hinduism. Together with later religious texts,[103] they described the *dharma[104]* (natural universal laws) which combines ethics and spiritual discipline that guide the people. The *Veda* builds the framework for rites and the first step for the development of a caste system by establishing the caste of priest (*Brahmans* - the sacred). And with this, they build the basis for the understanding of Hinduism as not simply a religion. Renou explains that rather "… Hinduism characterizes society as a whole. The caste system with its various "stages" of existence is part of Hinduism. Life is looked upon as a rite; there is no absolute dividing line between the sacred and the profane."[105] Altogether, Hinduism is the basis for the huge fragmentation

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[101] Oxtoby, *World Religions: Eastern Traditions*, 16.

[102] For more details to the *Veda* see R. C. Zaehner, *Hinduism* (Oxford University Press: 1962), 18-46. A chronological chart is found in Philip H. Ashby, *Modern Trends in Hinduism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), 135.

[103] Like the *Mahabharata,* the *Bhagavad-gita* (the Celestial Song or the Evangile of Krsnaism), the *Puranas*, the *Samhitas,* the *Agamas,* the *Tantras,* the *Vedanta* or the *Yoga.*

[104] For more details to *dharma* see Zaehner, *Hinduism,* 4-5 and 134-163.

[105] Louis Renou, *Hinduism* (New York: G. Braziller, 1961), 18.

of Indian-Hindu society. Despite the above-mentioned inherent contradictions, Stroup identifies a common core of Hinduism which consists of five basic elements: "belief in god, reverence for the Vedas, the practice of rituals, certain ideas that govern life, and caste."[106]

Hinduism does not just set the rules for individual worship and the relationship between man and gods, rather it sets the frame for the social system in India as well.[107] The belief in *Karma* (doing or work) and reincarnation, for example, means that people's intentions and deeds lead to punishment or reward after death and rebirth. Bad intentions or deeds are bad *Karma* and lead after death to a rebirth or reincarnation in a lower world or caste. Only the souls of those who rely on faith and are able to isolate the self or the soul from the world around will be liberated from rebirth and enter a new, higher stage.[108] Thus, Renou characterises Hinduism "… as a system of the means appropriate for the attainment of Liberation."[109] The belonging to a caste is therefore a result of the life before reincarnation and the current life is, in this sense, only a phase in a continuing journey to liberation. With this, the caste system is essential for Hinduism as a religion as for the entire Indian society.[110] Because of the close relationship between Hinduism and daily life, it is impossible to separate the realm of Hinduism from society and, therefore,

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[106] Stroup, *Like a Great River; an Introduction to Hinduism*, 54.

[107] Hinduism has not only one word for God and knows different deities. Hinduism knows three classical deities in the *trimurti* ("Hindiu triad" or "great trinity"), *Vishnu* is, in the view of Hinduism, the preserver, while *Brahma* is the creator and *Shiva* is the destroyer. In addition to this *trimurti*, Hinduism knows *Ganesa*, the observer, and *Surya*, the sun, as deities. They all form the group of *pancayanata*. Besides these main deities, Hinduism has thirty-three other deities which live in the earth, the water or in heaven. In order to explain key elements of Hinduism, the word God is used here as a synonym for all kinds of deities and divine beings.

[108] Liberation in the sense of Hinduism is called *moksha*. For more details to the concept of *moksha* see Zaehner, *Hinduism*, 75-104.

[109] Renou, *Hinduism*, 42.

[110] "… the acceptance of the caste system was considered by the orthodox to be the sole effective criterion of whether one was or was not a Hindu. … To ignore caste or to reject the Veda was to put oneself outside the pale of Hinduism." Zaehner, *Hinduism*, 10.

from the realm of politics.[111] Even though India is a secular state, Hinduism and its traditions influence attitudes and actions of Indian politicians. Renou deduces that "An important consequence of this is tolerance, nonviolence considered an active virtue; this is a manner of acting which must be respected – even in the political sphere – *regardless of the attitude of other*."[112] In principle, this tolerant orientation of Hinduism hampered the BJP from imposing a dogmatic and centralized view of Hinduism with a dominating character.

2. Indian Nationalism

According to Khilnani, "'Indian nationalism' is a somewhat misleading shorthand phrase to describe a remarkable era of intellectual and cultural ferment and experimentation inaugurated in the late nineteenth century."[113] Depending on the point of view, "Indian nationalism" has different origins. First, one can find the origins of Hindu nationalism in the religion of Hinduism. At the end of the nineteenth century, a religious movement wanted to reform Hinduism and bring it back to the causes of traditional Hinduism. This religious movement was the basic motivation for many Indians to participate in the political sphere in order to put these ideas into practise. One example of this connection of religion and politics can be found in the person of Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856–1920). Ashby tells about Tilak: "Frequently referred to as "the father of Indian Nationalism," Tilak was a Maharastrian Brahman whose Hindu orthodoxy and Sanskrit learning gave him an authoritative religious voice, while his dedication to "Swaraj," or political independence, at great personal sacrifice gave him a heroic status of great appeal to his countrymen."[114] Tilak wrote (1910-1911) a commentary to the *Bhagavadgita*, one of the most important religious scriptures of Hinduism. He had the opinion that it was not the nature of the *Bhagavadgita* to describe three or four different ways to redemption, rather, in his interpretation, for ordinary men, it is decisive to act in order to come closer

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[111] For details of influences on society and family, see Stroup, *Like a Great River; an Introduction to Hinduism*, 143-184.

[112] Renou, *Hinduism*, 55-56.

[113] Khilnani, *The Idea of India*, 153.

[114] Ashby, *Modern Trends in Hinduism*, 96.

to the Divine. In his sense, acting means doing something for the welfare of all, but based on the ancient values of Hinduism which are the guidelines for any behavior. On the basis of this interpretation, Tilak opposed any foreign influence or western orientation. For him, true political and social independence of India were preconditions for establishing a capable Hindu government for the people of India. With this, Tilak marked the foundation for Indian-Hindu political and social activism. But, his interpretation of the *Bhagavadgita* stands in contrast to other interpretations, which emphasize not only action but the elements of knowledge, devotion and adoration in the *Bhagavadgita* as well. [115]

A second foundation of Indian nationalism can be found in the political sphere and the politics of the Indian National Congress (Congress). The Congress was founded in 1885. Firstly just an organization to improve the access of Indians to posts in the British administration of India, it became more and more political. And even the Congress was influenced by the ideas of Bal Gangadhar Tilak. He was a member of the Congress and used the Congress as a platform for spreading his ideas of Indian independence. But his political thoughts of using violent means to reach the goals of the Congress stood in opposition to the moderate views of other members of the Congress.[116] Under the leadership of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (Mahatma Gandhi), the Congress, from 1920 on, became a mass movement of Hindus and Muslims. Despite of all struggles and rivalries inside the Congress (caste against caste, community against community etc.), the unifying idea for this mass movement was the common goal of ending British colonialism and gaining the independence of the subcontinent.

By 1946, it became clear that the independence of the subcontinent would lead to two independent states. The Muslim League under the leadership of Muhammad Ali Jinnah was successful with its demand for founding an independent state called Pakistan for the areas with a Muslim majority.[117] But even after the violent partition of Pakistan

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[115] See Ibid., 96-97 and Stanley A. Wolpert, *Tilak and Gokhale: Revolution and Reform in the Making of Modern India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962), 370.

[116] For more detailed information about the struggle between different wings inside of the Congress see Daniel Argov, *Moderates and Extremists in the Indian National Movement, 1883-1920; with Special Reference to Surendranath Banerjea and Lajpat Rai* (Bombay: Asia Pub. House, 1967), and Wolpert, *Tilak and Gokhale: Revolution and Reform in the Making of Modern India.* Wolpert puts a special focus on the role of Bal Gangadhar Tilak for the discussion inside the Congress.

[117] *The Emergence of India and Pakistan* (New Delhi: India Pergamon Press, 2007).

and India, the idea of an Indian Nation was the unifying background for the Congress.[118] In combination with charismatic and clever leadership (Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru), this was the basis on which to establish the Congress as an organization that represented nearly all classes, castes, religions and ethnic groups.[119] According to Varshney, the idea was that all "… religions (as well as languages and other groups) have an equal place in the national family and as a principle, none will dominate the functioning of the state."[120] But, in 1947, it was not clear that this idea of a secular Indian nationalism would succeed over an ethno-religious mobilization of nationalism. Secularism became the norm for India's political system and Hindu nationalism was marginalized.[121]

The success of the Congress Party in the early years after Indian independence was based mainly on the capability of the Congress and its leaders to cover all the differences of the multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic, multi-caste and multi-religious society of India with the overarching idea of the Indian nation under the umbrella of one organization.[122] With this unifying idea of an Indian nation, Congress leaders created an Indian nationalism which appears to match the common definition of nationalism; however, some distinctions from nationalism are perceptible.[123] Indian nationalism was,

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[118] The violence during the partition phase is not in the focus of this examination, although it could serve as a starting point of Hindu Muslim tensions in modern history of India because it remained in the common memory of both countries and ethnic groups, but it was not decisive for increasing violence in the late 1980s and early 1990s (see Gyanendra Pandey, *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism, and History in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 218.).

[119] Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*, 80-91.

[120] Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India*, 56.

[121] Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*, 81.

[122] For a closer look into the so called "Congress System in India see Rajni Kothari, "The Congress 'System' in India," *India's Political Parties*, eds. Peter Ronald de Souza and E. Sridharan (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2006), 58-72.

[123] Jack L. Snyder, *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict* (New York: Norton, 2000), 23 for example defines nationalism as "… the doctrine that a people who see themselves as distinct in their culture, history, institutions, or principles should rule themselves in a political system that expresses and protects those distinctive characteristics." For a discussion about different definitions of nationalism see Henk Dekker, Darina Malova and Sander Hoogendoorn, "Nationalism and its Explanations," *Political Psychology* 24, no. 2, Special Issue: National Identity in Europe (June 2003), 345-376. They show that the term "Nationalism" is neither yet clearly defined nor scientifically well supported. "The concept "nationalism" has different meanings relating to various levels of analysis: nationalism as an ideology, a movement, the process of "nation" and "nation-state" building, and an individual's political orientation. Moreover, several different types and intensities of nationalism are distinguished in disconnected ways." Ibid., 345.

until 1947, directed against the British and their rule over India. But after independence, Indian nationalism was a means to tie Indian citizens together in order to prevent further violent partitions, to ensure the development of a secular Indian democracy and to guarantee the continued existence of the nation state of India.[124] The unifying power of Indian nationalism was in this sense not just a means to gain independence from Great Britain, but rather a precondition for developing a modern India.[125] After gaining independence, Indian nationalism in the sense of Gandhi and Nehru, was a positive force for Indians, but never a force to be directed against others in India or outside of India.

3. Hindutva

a. *Foundation and Characteristics*

"*Hindutva* – who is a Hindu" (*Hindutva* means Hinduness) was the name of a book published in 1923 written by Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, a colleague of Bal Gangadhar Tilak. With his book, the idea of a Hindu-Nation was first promulgated in public. It became, therefore, the foundation of the modern ideology of Hindu-nationalism. "… Hindutva marked a qualitative change in Hindu nationalism, aspects of which had previously been combined in a loose ideology but which had now acquired a more systematic exposition."[126] In his book, Savarkar identified three cornerstones for the Hindu Nation. These are: *rashta* (common holy ground), *jati* (common blood) and *sanskriti* (common culture). For Savarkar, only Hindus have a claim to India as a nation because of the ancient common Hindu culture, history, language, and religion of India. He included in his theses thoughts of all kinds of Hindu sects, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhs, but he excluded the Muslims of having ties to the holy land of India.[127] Savakar's ideas of Hindutva were similar to the *Rassenideologie* of the Nazis in Germany:

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[124] A detailed analysis of the discussion during the process of developing a secular India is given by Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*, 80-106.

[125] Stuart Corbridge, "The Militarization of all Hindudom'? the Bharatiya Janata Party, the Bomb, and the Political Spaces of Hindu Nationalism," *Economy and Society* 28, no. 2 (1999), 233.

[126] Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*, 32.

[127] Ashby, *Modern Trends in Hinduism*, 98-99 and Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*, 25-33. Hansen, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India*, 77-80.

"Germany has also shown how well nigh impossible it is for Races and cultures, having differences going to the root, to be assimilated into one united whole, a good lesson for us in Hindustan to learn and profit by."[128]

Savarkar's book had four major effects. **First**, Savarkar opposed the British rule over India and promoted a Hindu nation. With this, the concept of Hindutva not only propagated independence from the West but also provided a religious, cultural and social counter concept to Western ideas. Herewith, Hindu nationalism was a counter ideology to the idea of a rational secular Indian nationalism presented by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (Mahatma Gandhi) and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.[129] **Second**, with his definition of a common holy ground, he opposed partition of a Muslim Pakistan and claimed the entire subcontinent for the Hindus. Hinduism was to have the dominating role in the definition of the nation on the subcontinent. **Third**, by defining Hinduism through religion, he excluded other religions (except those with holy places placed on the common holy ground) from being Hindus, from making claims on the land of the Hindus, and from being part of the Hindu society in the Hindu state. With this, Muslims and Christians had no right to active participation in society and politics. They were to become second-class citizens and be dominated by the Hindus.[130]

Finally, the concept of Hindutva had an effect on the Hindu part of the society as well. This became clear when the Hindu nationalist party, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), started a campaign in 1990 against the results of the Mandal Commission report. This report recommended measures to improve the representation of lower and "Other Backward Classes" (OBCs) in public administration. On the one hand, Hindu nationalists were against the recommendation of the Mandal Commission because it was seen as "… highly divisive of the 'Hindu community' because it pitted lower castes

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[128] Savakar cited from Aijaz Ahmad, *Lineages of the Present: Ideology and Politics in Contemporary South Asia* (London: Verso, 2000), 286.

[129] See Yogendra K. Malik and V. B. Singh, *Hindu Nationalists in India: The Rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party* (Boulder: Westview press, 1994), 3-27.

[130] Ashby, *Modern Trends in Hinduism*, 98-99 and Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*, 25-33. Hansen, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India*, 77-80.

against upper, and because caste identity is more strongly felt than religious identity."[131] On the other hand, Hindutva ensured exactly the opposite by focusing on a Hindu society with a traditional structure with caste dominance.[132] The BJP was in opposition to these recommendations and started the campaign for the Ram temple in Ayodhya. With this "religious" campaign, Hindu nationalists were able to cover up the negative consequences of the refusal of their Mandal Commission with a high moral campaign.[133]

b. *Legal Position*

Contrary to Savarkar's thoughts about a Hindu nation, the preamble of the Indian constitution defines India as a secular state. Furthermore, Article 25 of the Constitution of India guarantees the freedom of religion and together with Article 26 determines India as a secular state. In addition to this, articles 29 and 30 ensure the protection of minorities. But, as shown, the Indian idea of secularism differs from the idea of secularism in Western countries.

The Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court of India, in several cases, judged the meaning of the terms "Hinduism" and "Hindutva." In 1966, it decided that Hinduism and Hindutva are not unambiguous definable and cannot be explained as religious terms. They argued that the Hindu civilization got its name in ancient times following the name of the river Sindhu (now Indus) were civilization settled. With this, Hindu and Hinduism had initially a geographical, not a religious foundation. Hinduism itself is not only a religion but also a philosophy with diverse forms of belief which tolerate other ways of thinking and beliefs. And, Hindutva describes a way of life rather than a term of religious Hindu nationalism.[134] Last, in 1995, the judges of the Supreme Court ruled consistently with the decision of 1966.

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[131] Achin Vanaik, "Communalization of Indian Polity," *India's Political Parties*, eds. Peter Ronald de Souza and E. Sridharan (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2006), 193.

[132] G. Aloysius, "Trajetory of Hindutva," *Economic and Political Weekly* 29, no. 24 (1994).

[133] Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*, 411-436.

[134] The Constitution Bench in Sastri Yagnapurushadji and Others vs. Muldas Bhudardas Vaishya and Another, 1966 (3) SCR 242.

Thus, it cannot be doubted, particularly in view of the Constitution Bench decisions of this Court that the words `Hinduism' or `Hindutva' are not necessarily to be understood and construed narrowly, confined only to the strict Hindu religious practices unrelated to the culture and ethos of the people of India, depicting the way of life of the Indian people. Unless the context of a speech indicates a contrary meaning or use, in the abstract these terms are indicative more of a way of life of the Indian people and are not confined merely to describe persons practicing the Hindu religion as a faith.

Considering the terms `Hinduism' or `Hindutva' per se as depicting hostility, enmity or intolerance towards other religious faiths or professing communalism, proceeds from an improper appreciation and perception of the true meaning of these expressions emerging from the detailed discussion in earlier authorities of this Court. Misuse of these expressions to promote communalism cannot alter the true meaning of these terms.[135]

This decision of the Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court gave Hindu nationalists an opportunity to use the terms "Hinduism" and "Hindutva" officially in the secular sense, but also subliminally, as a means to exclude, especially, Indian Muslims in the sense of the thoughts of Savarkar. And Nauriya argues that "… the judgments reflect a growing tendency towards appropriation of the BJP-RSS conceptual framework by state institutions."[136]

B. THE HINDU NATIONALIST NETWORK (SANGH PARIVAR)

1. The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) (Association of National Volunteers) is a Hindu nationalist organization, founded in 1925 by Keshava Baliram Hedgewar as a culture and welfare organization with the intention of promoting the idea of a Hindu nation on the basis of the *Hindutva*.[137] This original character of the RSS changed over

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[135] Supreme Court of India, "Judgment with civil appeal no 2835 of 1989 Bal Thackeray V.Shri Prabhakar Kashinath Kunte & Others," http://indiankanoon.org/doc/925631/ (accessed May 28, 2009).

[136] Anil Nauriya, "The Hindutva Judgments – A Warning Signal," *Economic and Political Weekly* 31, no. 1 (1996), 11.

[137] Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*, 33-53 gives a detailed analysis of the person of Hedgewar and the development of the RSS in the early years.

time under the leadership of Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar who led the RSS from 1940 until 1973. He escalated the thoughts in Savarkar's book about *Hindutva* by defining the nation state referring to Hinduism. For him, not the borders of a state marked the boundaries of citizenship, but the affiliation with Hinduism. Therefore, he founded RSS as a social organization for Hindus. With this religious context, he excluded Muslims and Christians explicitly from being citizens of India, denying them the same rights as Hindu citizens. For him, one shining example in distinguishing between different citizens was Germany, under the Nazi rule.[138] Golwalkar and the RSS tried to construct a new Hindu identity which would overcome what they considered to be one of the traditional weaknesses of Hinduism, its passiveness and its disaccord. One of the means to this end could be disciplined violence.[139] Also, the idea for a separate Muslim nation had already begun by this time, led by a political poet Iqbal who became a presidential candidate in 1930.

Paradoxically for western observers, Golwalkar, as well as Savarkar and Hedgewar, saw no contradiction between the call for violence and the tolerant nature of Hinduism. They saw the preparation for violent actions as a necessary means to demonstrate Hindu strength and be prepared in case of attacks from others.[140] Golwalkar argued that violence is necessary just to defend Hindus and Hinduism against such attacks. And, in this sense, all violent actions of Hindu nationalists were and are justified by pointing out actions of others, even in the ancient past, which are judged as attacks leading to counteraction by Hindu nationalists. In the sense of Hindu nationalists, their violence is nothing more than self-defense.[141]

Hindu nationalists argue that Hindus are in a constant stage of self-defense. Their main arguments are summarized as follows: **First**, they point out that Christianity and Islam are unable or unwilling to acknowledge other religions as equal. The website of the

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[138] For a more detailed analysis of the connection of Golwalkar's ideas of Hindu nationalism and the NS-ideology, see Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*, 53-62.

[139] Hansen, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India*, 80-84.

[140] See Thomas Blom Hansen, "Recuperating Masculinity – Hindu Nationalism, Violence and the Exorcism of the Muslim 'Other,'" *Critique of Anthropology* 16, no. 2 (1996).

[141] Hansen, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India*, 80-84.

RSS, for example, blamed the Pope for not signing a declaration considering all religions equal.[142] **Second**, they refer to the proselytizing, and therefore offensive character of Christianity and Islam as a constant threat for Hindus and Hinduism. They view the Muslims in India as part of a pan-Islamic front and therefore as a constant threat for a secular India. **Third**, they highlight the fact that many countries in the world can be called Christian or Islamic, but only Hinduism is tied to India and the holy ground of the Indian subcontinent. With this, they argue that in case of a threat, Christians and Muslims have the opportunity to leave India and settle in another Christian or Muslim country. In contrast to this, Hindus do not have such an opportunity because India is the holy ground of Hinduism and the only Hindu country in the world. So, Hindus are not able to retreat, they have to fight for their Hindu nation and Hindu state. **Fourth**, the threat by Muslims in India is real and constant. It is not only expressed by terrorist actions but as well by the increase of the Muslim population in connection with a number of mass conversions to Islam. But, most important, they mention the rise of minority rights and a number of decisions[143] of the Indian government which have led to special provisions for the Muslims but neglected, in the opinion of the Hindu nationalists, the rights of the Hindu majority of India.[144]

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[142] "As for Christianity or Islam, we desire that they too should fall in line of accepting the validity of other religions. The Millennium Peace Summit, which was held in New York in August 1999, adopted a declaration that they consider all religions equal. … . Surprisingly His Holiness the Pope struck a discordant note and declared that the Roman Catholic Church cannot accept other religions as equal. We wonder whether this is in consonance with the fundamentals of our constitution." Cited on Rashtria Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), "The RSS Position on Minorities," http://www.rss.org:8080/New_RSS/Mission_Vision/RSS_on_Minorities.jsp (accessed January 01, 2009).

[143] One of these decisions happened in 1985/1986 and was called the "Shah Bano affair." Shah Bano, a 62-year-old Muslim woman and mother of five children was divorced by her husband in 1978. Because she did not have any means to support herself and her children, she approached the courts for securing maintenance from her husband. In 1985, the case reached the Supreme Court. It ruled that Shah Bano had to be given alimony. The orthodox Muslims in India felt threatened at what they perceived was an encroachment of Muslim Personal Law, and protested against the judgment. They protested by large numbers. As a reaction, to this, the Congress ruled government enacted a law with which alimony provisions for Muslim women were, in conformity with the Sharia, abolished. With this action, the government wanted to prevent riots by the Muslims. Congress did not want to lose the Muslim votes for the next election. But the decision of the Congress government led at the same time to dissatisfaction on the side of the Hindus. They feared a rise of traditional Islamic power in India and an increase of minority rights, especially when these minorities threatened violence.

[144] Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*, 338-368, Sumanta Banerjee, "Hindutva – Ideology and Social Psychology," *Economic and Political Weekly* 26, no. 3 (1991), 98-99. Peter van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism: Hindus and Muslims in India* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994), 25-33.

In the opinion of Hindu nationalists, the apparent rise of minority rights was a sign of betrayal by the Indian government under the rule of the Indian National Congress (Congress) of the Hindu majority in India. With this argument, Hindu nationalists built up a chain of arguments whith a religious starting point (Hinduism). These arguments define on this basis the nation and state, and conclude that only politics for the majority (of the Hindus) is legitimate for the (Hindu) state. But, today, this chain of arguments is not as obvious as it was at the time of Golwalkar. Today's RSS website uses the same definition of Hinduism as used by the Constitution Bench of Indian Supreme Court: "It should be noted that the Hindu Code Bill, though it contains the word 'Hindu,' is applicable to Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists. We desire that it should be applicable to all, including the Christians and the Muslims, as is envisaged in Article 44 of our constitution. The basic postulate is that 'Hindu' is not a religion but a way of life, or more precisely a certain value-system or culture. One of the basic tenets of this value system is to accept the validity of all faiths and religions. If we deny this plurality, we will cease to be Hindus."[145]

But even with this broader definition of Hinduism, Hindu nationalists still demand that Hinduism, and its historical, cultural and religious traditions, should be the foundation for the Indian nation and the Indian nation state. The Hindu nationalist argument for self-defense is a call for equality of religions, but more importantly, a demand for India as a state of Hindus and for Hindus. This becomes clearer when one reads the statement of the RSS regarding minority rights: "The RSS is not against any religion, but some religions are extremely intolerant of other religions. Why could 5% Hindus not live with dignity and honor in the Kashmir valley?"[146] With this argument, the RSS is not against Islam officially, but for Hindus and the rights of the majority. And the RSS has been able to change to a more moderate rhetoric because it has "… steadily

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[145] RSS on minorities at the homepage of the RSS. Rashtria Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), *The RSS Position on Minorities* (accessed January 01, 2009).

[146] RSS on minorities at the homepage of the RSS. Ibid. (accessed January 01, 2009).

burrowed its way into the pores of civil society in many parts of the country."[147] And, additionally, with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) as its partner it has a strong arm in the political sphere.

2.   The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP)

The Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP - World Hindu Council) was founded in August 1964 on the initiative of Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar. Golwalkar recognized that the RSS was mainly a social and political organization of Hindu nationalists, but had no link to religious Hindu groups. In order to compensate for this flaw, he started the initiative to build the VHP. According to Hansen, the VHP "… was intended to provide a bridge between the religious establishment and the RSS."[148] The aim of the VHP was to offer all religious Hindu groups in India and abroad a forum for their common interests. The common ground was to be the thoughts of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar and the RSS ideology of Hinduism. By establishing such an institution, Golwakar hoped to strengthen Hinduism and to overcome its weakness of religious diversity. The main objectives of the VHP were to " (1) … to consolidate and strengthen the Hindu society. (2) To protect, develop and spread the Hindu values of life – ethical and spiritual. (3) To establish and reinforce contacts with and help all Hindus living abroad. (4) To welcome back all who had gone out of the Hindu fold … (5) To render social service to humanity at large … (6) … to revitalise the eternal Hindu Society by rearranging the code of conduct of our age-old Dharma … (7) To eradicate the concept of untouchability from the Hindu society."[149]

In order to reach these objectives, the VHP had a strong organizational structure which covered all parts of India and reached every village. On the foundation of this organization, the VHP developed many different activities. These activities were comprised of the building of temples, schools, libraries and hospitals, the organization of campaigns, events, processions and sacrificial ceremonies, and several kinds of social

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[147] Vanaik, *Communalization of Indian Polity*, 182.

[148] Hansen, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India*, 101.

[149] "Messages and Activities," VHP pamphlet, New Delhi, 1982 cited from van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism: Hindus and Muslims in India*, 130.

activities. With this, the VHP did not obtain just attention and support of the people, but was as well able to organize and mobilize the masses for its purposes.[150]

In addition to this, the VHP tried to change the diversity of Hinduism by creating a common basis for Hinduism. One of its means was the demand for the abolition of the untouchables. A second one was to institute the opportunity to convert from Islam to Hinduism. A third one was the creating of a Hindu code of conduct (*Achar Samhita*). Finally, the VHP tried to establish one common ceremony (*Ekatamata Yatras*) for all Hindus to worship the "mother goodness" of India (*Bharat Mata*).[151] At the core of this ceremony were two processions (*Yatra*) through India. With these, the VHP not only tried to establish a new characteristic of a unified Hinduism. More importantly, the symbol they created to serve as a means to unify the Hindus was one which represented the RSS ideology as well. It became clear that the VHP was in fact not just a religious organization, but used religious means for political purposes.[152] The processions organized by the VHP had different success in mobilizing the people. In South India, the success was not clear. But, in the Hindu strongholds they were a successful means to promote the ideology of the VHP by using religious symbols.

The VHP is an important brick in the building of the Hindu nationalist network because it promotes Hindu nationalism under the guise of religion. Jaffrelot argues that with this, the "… Vishva Hindu Parishad became the spearhead of Hindu militancy at the beginning of the 1980s."[153] The organizational structure gave the VHP the strength to mobilize masses[154] without thinking about the political constraints of secularism in India. Officially, outside the political sphere, the VHP acts as a support both for the ideological ideas of the RSS and for the political representatives of the Hindu nationalist movement.[155]

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[150] Hansen, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India*, 101-107.

[151] Ibid., 110-115.

[152] van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism: Hindus and Muslims in India*, 130-137.

[153] Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*, 346.

[154] Ibid., 346-358.

[155] Ibid., 193-202.

C.   THE LEGACY OF THE BHARATIYA JANA SANGH (BJS)

The Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS – Indian People's Union) was founded in 1951 by Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, a former member of the Hindu nationalistic party, Hindu Mahasabha (HMS), and minister for industry under the Nehru government until 1951.[156] Officially independent, the BJS was strongly tied to the RSS. The RSS was the ideological and organizational base and the source for recruitment of personnel for the BJS. As a countermove, the BJS gave the RSS the opportunity to act politically and to spread its ideas even in times when the RSS was banned. With this, the BJS could be named as the political wing of the RSS.[157]

According to Baxter, the political program of the BJS was based strictly on RSS ideology. "The Jana Sangh stated its "fundamentals" as "one country, one nation, one culture and the rule of law.""[158] With this nationalistic position, the BJS was a clear opponent of Pakistan and of the efforts of some regions like Jammu and Kashmir to gain independence. In addition to this, the concentration on Hinduism in combination with the rejection of minority rights led to the fact that the BJS could not compete with the INC and was not attractive to a majority of the people.

The BJS gained a stronger base of supporters in the middle class and in the small-scale business class. According to Graham, the BJS saw "… organizational principles of small industries were in harmony with Indian social tradition and that they were the best means of providing employment and producing consumer goods."[159] This policy was not only ideology-based it was also a counter-strategy to the Congress which was supported

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[156] For the origins of the BJS, see Graham, *Hindu Nationalism and Indian Politics*, 5-42.

[157] "Yet throughout the late 1950s and the 1960s it was handicapped, firstly by the suspicion that it was closely tied to, if not dependent upon, the RSS hierarchy and its organizational headquarters at Nagpur, secondly by its reputation for being an extremist body, with intolerant views on relations between Hindus and other religious communities, and, thirdly, by the inexperience and relative obscurity of its leadership." Ibid., 54. See as well Craig Baxter, *The Jana Sangh; a Biography of an Indian Political Party* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1969), 6-80; Hansen, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India*, 126-131; Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*, 114-132 and 149-157.

[158] Baxter, *The Jana Sangh; a Biography of an Indian Political Party*, 84. For details about the development of the BJS, its party program and the relationship between the BJS and the RSS, see Graham, *Hindu Nationalism and Indian Politics*, 43-93.

[159] Ibid., 159.

by large-scale industry. The BJS tried to gain support from urban groups, small industrialists, traders, and the middle class in order to broaden its voter base and close itself off from the Congress. But this counter-strategy towards the Congress was limited to certain areas. For example, in 1962 the BJS changed its manifesto and opposed the "Nehru-proposed joint cooperative farming program of the Congress."[160] However, overall, the main direction of BJS's interest group politics was directed towards the middle class and the small-scale business class. On the one hand, this strategy ensured the BJS a broader voter base (which was, later on, the voter base for the BJP as well) and financial support, but on the other hand, it limited the support to a relatively small group and excluded the majority of the population. The reason for this was the dominance of the Congress along with the limitations of the BJS's ideology to attract all groups of the society. For example, BJP's ideology treated the employees and the employers of small-scale industry as one cohesive group with one common interest. Herewith, it neglected the existence of class struggles and major differences between different social groups.[161]

Therefore, the election results of the BJS did not meet the expectations of the party officials. In 1954, The BJS won, from a total of 489 seats in the Lokh Sabah, 3 seats; in 1957, from 494 seats, won 4; in 1962, from 494 seats, won 14; in 1967, from 520, won 35; and in 1971, from 518, won 22. With these results, the BJS was an opposition party only and never gained power over India. Only in the northern part of India, the Hindu homeland, was the BJS able to gain power in a coalition with other parties for a short period of time.[162]

Only when the Congress appeared weak, in 1977, after ruling India for thirty years and for several more reasons was no longer able to convince the people that it was the party of all India and all Indians,[163] could the BJS join power in a coalition with other

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[160] Baxter, *The Jana Sangh; a Biography of an Indian Political Party*, 212.

[161] Graham, *Hindu Nationalism and Indian Politics*, 158-195.

[162] For details of the BJS results for the years 1954–1967, see Baxter, *The Jana Sangh; a Biography of an Indian Political Party*, 320-335. For details of BJS' strategy see Graham, *Hindu Nationalism and Indian Politics*, 196-252. For the BJS and BJP votes after 1967, see Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India*, 73. For more details, see the website of the Election commission of India: http://www.eci.gov.in/.

[163] See Stanley A. Wolpert, *A New History of India*, 6th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 371-451.

parties and cease to exist. The partners of this alliance together formed a new party, called the Janata Party. Atal Bihari Vajpayee became Minister of External Affairs and Lal Krishna Advani the Minister for Home Affairs.[164] The Janata party was less a party with its own voter base than an alliance of different parties with normally incompatible single aims. The only reason for them to build a coalition was to drive Congress from power.[165] Because of the heterogeneity of the alliance, the Janata party could remain in power only a short time. But, that time gave the representatives of the BJS the opportunity to have experience with ruling a government and rethinking their strategy to gain power.[166] After the breakdown of the Janata party, the former members of the BJS founded the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP – Indian People's Party) in 1980.

D.   CONCLUSION

The depiction of Hinduism and Indian nationalism shows how interwoven religious, social and political issues are in India. Because it is never easy to differentiate political aspects from religious aspects, it is very easy for Hindu nationalists to use religious feelings for political purposes. In this sense, Hindu nationalism is a product of different Hindu sentiments in combination with an exploitation of religious issues. Hindu nationalists would argue that Hindu nationalism's aim was to transform Hinduism from a (in comparison with other religions) subordinate status into a status of equality by strengthening Hinduism and abolishing its weaknesses. Gandhi's idea of a "feminized patriotism"[167] should be removed by an interpretation of virility and masculinity for the Hindu nation. And, they would emphasize the character of Hinduism not as a religion but as a way of life with distinctive features in comparison with other religions and ways of life. As Hansen argues, "India's spiritual superiority and the universal mission of Hindu

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[164] For details about Vajpayee see: Malik and Singh, *Hindu Nationalists in India. The Rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party*, 39-40. For details about Advani, see: Ibid., 40-43.

[165] Hansen, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India*, 131-133, and Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*, 255-313 give more details about the discussion in the BJS about participation in the Janata Party.

[166] Bruce D. Graham, "The Challenge of Hindu Nationalism: The Bharatiya Janata Party in Contemporary Indian Politics" In *India's Political Parties*, eds. Peter Ronald de Souza and E. Sridharan (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2006), 159.

[167] Khilnani, *The Idea of India*, 164.

philosophy to be a "spiritual corrective" to a materialistic and overly rationalist western world remains a cornerstone in contemporary Hindu nationalism."[168]

Additionally, the discussion about the role of Hinduism and the term "Hindutva" shows the flaws of India's constitution to ensure secularism in the sense of Gandhi and Nehru. Hindu nationalists were able to re-interpret the constitution and establish an ambiguous view on secularism. Their interpretation of secularism gave the RSS and the VHP the opportunity to use religious issues for political purposes, and tried to change the interpretation of "who is an Indian" from a broader Gandhian interpretation to a narrow interpretation in the sense of Savarkar. Hindu nationalists used any flaw in India's political system as a means for political maneuvering, to mobilize masses, and to exclude minorities from being considered true Indian citizens. But, this discussion is not just a discussion about citizenship. Rather, it is more the attempt of Hindu nationalists to change the identity of the Indian nation and the nation-state.

Furthermore, the depiction of the characteristics of the RSS and VHP show the strength of the organizational power of the Sangh Parivar. Based on a strong ideology and provided with a strong leadership, the forces of the Sangh Parivar were able to intersect all parts of society and to reach every village. This ensures power and influence on society in a broad spectrum. The example of the BJS shows the significance of the influence the Sangh Parivar has, as a collateral organization, on a political party. The Sangh Parivar and the BJS shared the same ideological basis, had the same goals, and were comprised of the same personnel. As the political arm of the RSS, it was the aim of the BJS to transform Hindutva–ideology into the political realm and to set the stage for a political change of India's national identity.

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[168] Hansen, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India*, 229.

IV. BJP'S POLITICS

This chapter examines the BJP's politics in more detail. The examination consists of the historical development of the BJP and two case studies.

The examination of the BJP's politics over a time frame of twenty-eight years describes continuities and discontinuities in its behavior to discover the core character of the BJP as a predictor of future behavior. The depiction of the BJP's politics will examine different phases of the BJP's politics, which mark the shifts and changes of the BJP when influenced by different social forces.

In addition, two case studies show the BJP's politics and behavior in two prominent examples. The Ayodhya case is an example of how the BJP behaved in the domestic sphere and how Hindu nationalism influenced its behavior. In addition, the Kashmir case demonstrates how domestic politics and Hindu nationalism may influence the behavior of a government in an issue with relevance for international relations. The conclusions of both subparts of this chapter consist of an explanation of each case. These explanations show which factors influenced the BJP's behavior and led to certain political actions of the BJP. They also make clear how Hindu nationalism influences politics in India in general.

The chapter concludes with a summary of the main findings of the examination.

A.   THE DEVELOPMENT OF BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY (BJP) POLITICS

1.   The BJP as Opposition Party 1980–1998

a.   *The Consolidation Phase (1980–1984)*

The elections of 1980 brought the Congress back to power. The Janata Dal broke apart, and the successor parties were marginalized. After the founding of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the party leader, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, preferred a moderate course for the BJP. He tried to present the BJP as the successor of the Janata Party and as a democratic alternative to the Congress. The BJP softened a lot of its

fundamentalistic rhetoric, downplayed the connection to the RSS and argued that it was Vajpayee's goal to bring the thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi back into politics.[169] According to Malik, the reason for the dissociation from the Bharatiya Jana Party (BJS) was the limited voter base of the BJS. "The revival of the Jana Sangh would have been a step backward because its support base was confined to the high caste, urban middle class of the Hindi-speaking states of north and central India."[170] In order to be competitive and gain voters, the BJP had to broaden its voter base geographically and demographically without losing the support of its Hindu nationalistic voter base.[171] "To further modify the radical thrust of militant Hindu nationalism, the BJP leadership also committed itself to nationalism and national integration, democracy, positive secularism, and value-based politics. These five commitments were stressed as the striking features of the new party, distinguishing it from the Congress."[172]

But, this moderate course of the BJP was not undisputed inside the BJP and among the members of the Hindu nationalistic network. The BJP hardliners were afraid of the BJP losing its Hindu nationalistic identity, therefore losing its main supporter base and creating dependence on unreliable partners in electoral alliances. This dispute set the tone for the inner party struggles of the BJP during the next twenty years. For Basu, it is the debate and the contradiction of the two different identities of the BJP: "as militant social movement and moderate political party."[173]

However, the election of 1984 was a debacle for the BJP which won only two seats in the Lok Sabha. One reason for this was the assassination of Indira Gandhi in 1984, and the wave of sympathy for the Congress in the aftermath of the incident. Public

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[169] Hansen, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India*, 293, 157-159. Graham, *The Challenge of Hindu Nationalism: The Bharatiya Janata Party in Contemporary Indian Politics*, 155-172, 159-161. Malik and Singh, *Hindu Nationalists in India: The Rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party*, 59-62.

[170] Malik and Singh, *Hindu Nationalists in India: The Rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party*, 36.

[171] For more information about the connection of castes and membership of the BJP/RSS/VHP see Christophe Jaffrelot, "The Sangh Parivar between Sanskritization and Social Engineering" In *The BJP and the Compulsion of Politics in India*, eds. Thomas Blom Hansen and Christophe Jaffrelot (Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1998), 22-70.

[172] Malik and Singh, *Hindu Nationalists in India: The Rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party*, 38.

[173] Amrita Basu, "The Dialectics of Hindu Nationalism" In *The Success of India's Democracy*, ed. Atul Kohli (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 163.

opinion changed in the same way it had changed after the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, into full support of the Congress. With this support, the Congress won 403 seats.[174]

After the debacle of 1984, the BJP changed course again. The BJP analysis of the 1984 election showed that it was not only the wave of sympathy in the aftermath of Indira Gandhi's assassination, which led to the loss of voters for the BJP. Another reason was the lack of a clear party profile for the BJP. Even in the Hindu heartland, the BJP was not able to mobilize the Hindu nationalistic voter base as a majority.[175]

b. BJP as a Political Arm of the RSS (1984–1992)

The BJP had tried in the years before the 1984 election, to be a better Congress, but this had made the party into a duplicate of the Congress. The voters wanted a BJP with its own profile, even if this were an ideological one. The change of the BJP after the 1984 election involved several organizational, training and programmatically aspects. While the BJP had acted in the past as one block, after the 1984 change the party built up different sub-organizations in order to reach every single group of the population by using specific channels. In addition to this, the BJP intensified ideological training of cadres to form a foundation and an instrument for spreading its ideas. The task for these cadres was to intensify the cooperation with other Hindu nationalistic organizations like the RSS and the VHP. Programs and campaigns to promote agitation built the third column of the new BJP to strengthen the profile of the party. [176]

Under the new leadership of Lal Krishan Advani, the BJP went back to the old RSS and VHP rhetoric. With this new combination of Hindu religious and

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[174] Graham, *The Challenge of Hindu Nationalism: The Bharatiya Janata Party in Contemporary Indian Politics*, 162-163.

[175] Ibid., 168. Malik and Singh, *Hindu Nationalists in India: The Rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party*, 73-75.

[176] Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*, 314-330. Graham, *The Challenge of Hindu Nationalism: The Bharatiya Janata Party in Contemporary Indian Politics*, 164-168.

nationalistic agitation[177] they were able to expand their power base and won 89 seats in the 1989 Lok Sabha election and became the third strongest party in the Lok Sabha.[178] They supported the minority government of the national front under Prime Minister V.P. Singh. But, in 1990, when Singh decided to arrest Advani because of his participation in the Ayodhya campaign, the BJP withdrew its support for the National Front.

Likewise, in 1990, the BJP started a campaign against plans for realization of the recommendations of the Mandal Commission report by the government of Prime Minister V.P. Singh. This report recommended measures to improve the representation of lower and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in public administration. On the one hand, Vanaik argues that the BJP was against the recommendation of the Mandal Commission because it was seen as "… highly divisive of the 'Hindu community' because it pitted lower castes against upper, and because caste identity is more strongly felt than religious identity."[179] On the other hand, Aloysius argues that "… the Hindutva political mobilization is a concrete demonstration of as to how the masses can be kept under the traditional caste-dominance …"[180] The primary reason for refusing the recommendations of the Mandal Commission was the voter base of the BJP. The BJP was mainly supported by the upper castes[181] which had no interest in strengthening the position of the other castes.[182]

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[177] Hansen, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India*, 159-161. Malik and Singh, *Hindu Nationalists in India*, 76-88.

[178] For details of the Lok Sabha election, see Malik and Singh, *Hindu Nationalists in India*, 196-198.

[179] Vanaik, *Communalization of Indian Polity*, 193.

[180] Aloysius, *Trajetory of Hindutva*, 1451.

[181] Oliver Heath, "Anatomy of BJP's Rise to Power: Social, Regional and Political Expansion in 1990s," *Economic and Political Weekly* 34, no. 34/35 (August 21 – September 3, 1999), 2511. See also Desai, *Culturalism and Contemporary Right – Indian Bourgeoisie and Political Hindutva*, 703-710.

[182] "In the cities, the historical outbursts against the Mandal Commission again reflect the same fear of a possible disequilibrium that might have been brought about by the trespassing of the OBCs on the sacred territory of government jobs monopolized hitherto by the upper caste Hindus." Banerjee, *Hindutva – Ideology and Social Psychology*, 98.

In order to cover this negative attitude towards an improvement of the position of other castes that formed the majority of the population, the BJP intensified the campaign for the reconstruction of a Ram temple in Ayodhya.[183] But this was not the only reason for the Ayodhya campaign. The legend of Ram and the story of the temple of Ram in Ayodhya were very popular and widespread in India. For the Hindu nationalists, both the fight against the use of the Babri mosque as a mosque, and for construction of a Hindu temple at the birthplace of Ram was a logical continuation of a centuries old fight of Hindus against Muslims. Because of this, Ram was the ideal figure for Hindu identification. The religious diversity of Hinduism was reduced by making Ram a symbol of Hinduism and national unity.[184] With this "religious" campaign, Hindu nationalists were able to cover up the negative consequences of their refusal of accepting Mandal Commission recommendations with a high moral campaign.[185] These domestic reasons for the Ayodhya campaign were combined with BJP pressure on the national government for continuation of the politics towards Jammu and Kashmir.

The dispute about Kashmir is one example of tensions between Pakistan and India. This critical relationship was one reason for the BJP to demand an increase of defense expenditures, to modernize the armed forces and improve the links between armed forces and government. Likewise, with regards to Pakistan and the nuclear threat, the BJP demanded nuclear weapons for India's armed forces. For the BJP, it was unacceptable to put India under the nuclear umbrella of any super power because then India would be dependent on this protection and could not act as independently (and strongly) as Hindu nationalists wished India should. But, at the same time, the BJP

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[183] In 1984/1985, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), the Rashtrriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) started their campaign against the Babri mosque in Ayodhya. The Babri mosque was built probably in the 16th century by order of the first Mughal emperor of India, Barbur. The Hindus believe that the Babri mosque was built on the ruins of a Hindu temple which had been destroyed by a Muslim commander in chief. Many Hindus believe that the temple was built to commemorate the birthplace of *Rama* the king of Ayodhya and avatar (reincarnation) of the Hindu god *Vishnu*. On December 06, 1992, a group of approximately 150,000 Hindu Nationalists destroyed the Babri mosque in Ayodhya. In the aftermath of the demolition of the Babri mosque, riots between Muslims and Hindus occured all over India. As a result, more then 2,000 people were killed. The riots resulting from the events in Ayodhya were the beginning of a phase of increasing tensions between Hindus and Muslims in India.

[184] Hansen, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India*, 172-181. Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*, 363-368 and 388-392.

[185] Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*, 411-436.

favored steps towards normalization of the relations with Pakistan and China. However, the BJP criticized Pakistani support for "anti national" elements in Jammu and Kashmir and terrorists in Punjab. Normalization of foreign policy means, in the sense of the BJP, developing a unique Indian position of strength and representing this position with self-confidence in the political arena. In general, this position is similar to the position of the Congress. But the degree of call for "absolute" independence is higher in the BJP in comparison to the Congress.[186]

Also, in 1991, the BJP introduced an important change to the party profile to be more attractive for non-Hindu nationalistic voters. For the 1991 elections, economic issues came into the focus of party politics. Until 1991, the BJP supported the Congress' course of interventionism and a closed economy, but in 1991 they changed course towards a liberal market.[187] With this shift in party politics, the BJP became more attractive for middle class voters who had suffered from the fiscal and political crises of the 1980s. Herewith, the BJP followed the shift that the Congress carried out. The shift in the economic orientation of the party led to discussions within the Hindu nationalistic network but was not seen as a contradiction to the Hindu nationalistic orientation of the party and was compatible with BJP's party identity.[188] Even more, according to Malik, the BJP leadership argued that India's economic problems were caused by the Congress because its "… plan for economic development was borrowed from abroad, and so had no cultural relevance to the country."[189] Despite the more liberal economic course, this statement shows the borders for the BJP politics and its ambivalence. For the BJP liberal

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[186] See Ahuja, *BJP and the Indian Politics*, 164-186. The book is written by a supporter of the BJP.

[187] "In the latter half of the 1980s, BJP's resolutions on economic policies and criticism of the policies of Congress became organized around three main themes: firstly, that official policies were irresponsible and careless as they both allowed the foreign debt to grow and handed out tax exemptions and tax cuts to various groups. Secondly, that agriculture and the small-scale industry was neglected. The BJP had already from the mid-1980s taken over the demand for 'remunerative prices' which peasant movements effectively had propagated in various parts of the country." Thomas Blom Hansen, "The Ethics of Hindutva and the Spirit of Capitalism" In *The BJP and the Compulsion of Politics in India*, eds. Thomas Blom Hansen and Christophe Jaffrelot (Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1998), 299. For more details about the economic and industry policy of the BJP until 1994 see Ahuja, *BJP and the Indian Politics*, 116-125 and 152-163. The book is written by a supporter of the BJP.

[188] Pradeep K. Chhibber, "Who Voted for the Bharatiya Janata Party?" *British Journal of Political Science* 27, no. 4 (Oct. 1997), 631-639.

[189] Malik and Singh, *Hindu Nationalists in India: The Rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party*, 100.

markets meant primarily to liberalize the domestic market, but did not mean to integrate India fully into the globalized world economy. The BJP ideology of self-determination and self-reliance even in economics prevented a further development of the BJP about economic issues.[190]

In the 1991 elections, the BJP won 120 seats and became the strongest opposition party.[191] The BJP formed governments in four states in northern India and was able to gain ground in some states of the south. This expansion was furthered by a shift in the political system of India by which the state became more important for policy making. On the one hand, Yadav argues that this meant that "… there is now greater space and incentive for state-level political formations to emerge."[192] In principle, this meant an increasing number of parties on the state level and a decline of the Congress which lost the ability to be the unifying power for all groups of society. On the other hand, this development at the state level established the BJP as the second nationwide political power besides the Congress. The BJP "… was catapulted to the centre stage by the events of 1989–91."[193] This marked the end of the one-party dominance in India. The Ayodhya campaign gave the BJP a distinguished image, brought it into the national limelight and made it competitive. The BJP was now able to change the emphasis of its election campaign to be dependent on the composition of the voters in the single states. In states of the Hindu heartland, the BJP could focus on Hindu nationalistic topics, in other states the focus might change to economic themes. According to Vanaik, the BJP "… has been so positioned as to be the most likely beneficiary of the decline not just of the Congress but of the politics of old centrism."[194]

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[190] Malik and Singh, *Hindu Nationalists in India: The Rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party*, 99-106 and Hansen, *The Ethics of Hindutva and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 291-315.

[191] For details of the Lok Sabha election, see Malik and Singh, *Hindu Nationalists in India: The Rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party*, 198-207.

[192] Yogendra Yadav and Suhas Palshikar, "Party System and Electoral Politics in the Indian States, 1952–2002: From Hegemony to Convergence" in *India's Political Parties*, eds. Peter Ronald de Souza and E. Sridharan (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2006), 106.

[193] Ibid., 99.

[194] Vanaik, *Communalization of Indian Polity*, 182.

Besides an incompetent leadership of the Congress, one major reason for the success of the BJP during this time was its ability to mobilize the Hindu electorate by focusing on a common Hindu spirit. The BJP used the Ayodhya campaign to show its own strength and the weakness of its political opponents. Although 35% of all Hindus (and 24% of all Muslims) blamed the BJP for the demolition of the mosque, most Hindus (47%) and the majority of Muslims (73%) were of the opinion that the Congress-ruled national government was responsible for the destruction of the mosque.[195] And, even the violence at Ayodhya was used by BJP leaders for their own purposes. Officially, they denounced the riots and claimed no responsibility for them and their deadly results.[196] At the same time, however, the BJP justified violence by blaming the old government for being responsible for the comprehensible rage of the suppressed Hindus. Although the president of the BJP, Lal Krishna Advani, was at the site of the Babri mosque on that date and was accused of causing the demolition of the mosque, he never was convicted. Vanaik argues that "In a narrowly partisan sense, the Babri Masjid-Ram Janmabhoomi Ayodhya campaign did for the Sangh and the BJP what the Dandi Salt March did for the Congress-led national movement."[197]

The negative consequence of the Ayodhya campaign was that it limited the BJP's opportunities to get a majority of the voters. Although the BJP was able to appeal to a high percentage of the Hindu voters with the Ayodhya campaign, at the same

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[195] Chibber and Misra, *Hindus and the Babri Masjid: The Sectional Basis of Communal Attitudes*, 665-672.

[196] Ahuja, *BJP and the Indian Politics*, 281, a supporter of the BJP writes: "Religious riots were almost unknown to Indian history before the advent of the Britishers, who systematically developed a 'Divide and Rule' strategy to strengthen their regime. … Such violence is repugnant to our heritage and goes against our grain. But if it takes place nevertheless, it is so because its roots lie not in religious differences, but in the historical distrust subsisting between different sections of the people, and which during thirty years of Congress rule, Government policies have only accentuated, and which most politicians and political parties seek to exploit for expedient, electoral gains." Jasmine Zerinini-Brotel, "The BJP in Uttar Pradesh: From Hindutva to Consensual Politics" in *The BJP and the Compulsion of Politics in India*, eds. Thomas Blom Hansen and Christophe Jaffrelot (Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1998), 72-100, show how the BJP made profit of the violence in UttarPradesh. "The violence of the 1980s which escorted the decline of Congress rule … gave the BJP the opportunity to assert its image as a clean, organized and efficient party that would revitalize the state." Ibid., 79.

[197] Vanaik, *Communalization of Indian Polity*, 188.

time it kept the OBCs away from the BJP.[198] But, the OBC's were the most important voter group for gaining power in India.

b.   *Preparing for Power (1993–1998)*

Shortly after the demolition of the Babri mosque and the riots of 1992, the BJP lost votes during different state elections.[199] Despite the facts that the BJP leadership was officially whitewashed and the Indians made the Indian government primarily responsible for the deadly results of the Ayodhya incident, the BJP had to "pay the bill" for the riots. Even after the success of the Ayodhya campaign, it became clear that a strong Hindu nationalistic rhetoric in combination with violent action deterred voters from the center. The voter base for such a politic was limited to just a few states of the Hindu heartland.[200] The vote bank for the BJP identity was still a religious one. Chhibber's data from 1993 show that "Fifty-nine per cent of BJP activists were likely to pray, go to temple or attend religious meetings on a more or less regular basis, but only 20 per cent of the Congress and other party activists were similarly inclined."[201]

This religious party basis, in combination with the influence of RSS and VHP agents led to a reassessment about the right course for the BJP between 1992 and 1998. Especially after elections with minor success for the BJP, debates about the course of the BJP came up again.[202] "The median point of Indian politics has shifted closer to the Sangh ideology, but the old dilemma of whether or not the BJP, to expand, should move towards the centre still persists."[203] And this discussion was not just a discussion inside the BJP but inside the Hindu nationalistic network as well. Especially, the RSS and the VHP with their strong ideological foundation tried to prevent a drift of the BJP

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[198] Zerinini-Brotel, *The BJP in Uttar Pradesh: From Hindutva to Consensual Politics*, 79.

[199] Rajastan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh. For details of the State elections in 1993, see Malik and Singh, *Hindu Nationalists in India: The Rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party*, 208-212.

[200] Heath, *Anatomy of BJP's Rise to Power: Social, Regional and Political Expansion in 1990s*, 2511-2517, for an analysis of BJP election results on the state level (here Madhya Pradesh), see for example Christophe Jaffrelot, "Setback to BJP," *Economic and Political Weekly* 31, no. 2/3 (January 13-20, 1996), 129-137.

[201] Chhibber, *Who Voted for the Bharatiya Janata Party?* 632.

[202] "BJP – Back to Hindutva?" *Economic and Political Weekly* 31, no. 48 (1996).

[203] Vanaik, *Communalization of Indian Polity*, 194.

towards the centre. The dispute inside the Hindu nationalistic network led to the point that, according to Malik, in 1992, "… Professor Rajender Singh, the general secretary of the RSS, had declared that all parties, including the Congress (I), were equal for them."[204] The reason for this was not only the moderate course of the BJP, but the course of the Congress towards support of Hindu issues as well.[205]

These discussions did not lead to a fundamental change in party direction, but mostly to a change in party rhetoric. The BJP was still a Hindu nationalistic party and both the party program as well as the election manifest was still based on the idea of Hindutva. Even the position towards the state of Jammu and Kashmir was left unchanged. The idea was still to full integration of Kashmir with the Union.[206]

The reason for the change in party rhetoric and the slight adaptation of party direction was neither a fundamental change of party direction, nor just the party's defeat in some states. According to Hansen, "This change occurred partly because the party leaders feared that the Vishva Hindu Parishad would overshadow their organization and that they would lose control of the Hindu nationalist political agenda to these more extremist forces …."[207] In addition to this, neither the RSS/VHP nor the hardliners of the BJP, during the election campaign of 1996, were able to mobilize masses in processions as they did in 1992. At least, the moderate wing of the BJP under its leader Vajpayee triumphed over the hardliners and set a more moderate course for the BJP. Therefore, the BJP was able to build up new alliances with other regional parties.[208]

The slight change of party direction contained two aspects. **First**, a rejection of participation in violent actions against Muslims. After 1992, Hindu nationalists did not have to support the idea of Mandir[209] by organizing more processions or violent actions because the idea was already part of the public and according to Yadav,

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[204] Malik and Singh, *Hindu Nationalists in India: The Rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party*, 73.

[205] Ibid, 62-73.

[206] Thomas Blom Hansen and Christophe Jaffrelot, "The BJP After the 1996 Elections," *The BJP and the Compulsion of Politics in India*, eds. Thomas Blom Hansen and Christophe Jaffrelot (Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1998), 3.

[207] Ibid., 2.

[208] Ibid.

[209] Mandir is a house of worship for Hindus.

political discourse, and the BJP had already created with the Ayodhya campaign "… something of an issue cleavage at the national level."[210] The Ayodhya case was still part of the party program, but dealing with Ayodhya showed the shift in party rhetoric. Hansen mentioned that "… the party's double-speak was most apparent in 1997. At a BJP-sponsored Muslim youth conference, Advani assured the Muslims that they had nothing to fear, but he made a point of mentioning all the issues that had alienated the party from the Muslim community, thus emphasizing that the party was not diluting its core concerns."[211]

Second, an opening of the party towards a better representation of backward castes. According to the ideology of Hindutva and the unity of all Hindus, the opening of the party was, according to Shah, a necessity. "Such unity is not possible without mobilizing backward castes, Dalits and tribals."[212] But, more important, the opening was a means to gain voters from all castes and classes. "The upper-caste character of Hindu nationalism has become a greater handicap for the BJP in the 1990s because of the growing political consciousness of the low castes in the wake of the 'Mandal affair.' The party could not ignore the OBC's which account for 52 per cent of the population and which were especially mobilized in its strongholds of north India."[213] Thus, it is not a wonder that one major plank for the BJP campaign of the 1996 elections was, according to Kantha, "… to highlight its support for the implementation of Mandal Commission recommendations."[214] Facing the known problem of any nationalistic party on its way to gaining voters from the right and from the center, the BJP tried to find a

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[210] Yadav and Palshikar, *Party System and Electoral Politics in the Indian States, 1952-2002: From Hegemony to Convergence*, 103.

[211] Thomas Blom Hansen, Zoya Hasan and Christophe Jaffrelot, "Short Cuts to Power" in *The BJP and the Compulsion of Politics in India*, eds. Thomas Blom Hansen and Christophe Jaffrelot (Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1998), 318.

[212] Ghanshyam Shah, "The BJP's Riddle in Gujarat: Caste, Factionalism and Hindutva," *The BJP and the Compulsion of Politics in India*, eds. Thomas Blom Hansen and Christophe Jaffrelot (Calcutta,: Oxford University Press, 1998), 251.

[213] Jaffrelot, *The Sangh Parivar between Sanskritization and Social Engineering*, 30. See as well Zerinini-Brotel, *The BJP in Uttar Pradesh: From Hindutva to Consensual Politics*, 72-100 with an example of the state of Uttar Pradesh.

[214] Pramod K. Kantha, "General Elections, 1996: BJP Politics: Looking Beyond the Impasse," *Economic and Political Weekly* 32, no. 48 (November 29 – December 5, 1997), 3093.

way to distinguish itself as an alternative to the Congress without losing its party identity. The BJP tried to solve this problem especially by addressing as candidates for the BJP those OBC's who had strong ties to the Hindu nationalistic network and the idea of Hindutva. They were fewer agents of their caste / class but of the Hindu nationalist ideology. Therefore, the nomination of candidates from lower castes and classes was not necessarily an indicator of the opening of the BJP. While the BJP remained mainly a party of the upper castes and Hindu nationalists of other castes, it joined coalitions with other parties which represented lower castes.[215]

The cleavage created by the Ayodhya / Mandir campaign was during this phase transported and exploited by the BJP in different ways in the various states. The trend of fragmentation led to an increasing importance of the state level for India's party politics. The BJP reacted to this by addressing voters in the Hindu heartland in ways other than as potential voters in states outside of the Hindu heartland.[216] Due to this fact, the BJP could change to a more moderate rhetoric without losing its own profile as a distinction to the Congress and without losing its strength in the Hindu heartland. The BJP portrayed itself as a modern and progressive party with a strong support for a new definition of the Indian nation state, with its specific understanding of secularity and a self confident dealing with minorities in Hindu India. The result was a new BJP image of self confidence, modernity and progress. Therefore, the BJP was able to obtain voters from the Congress and from the Hindu nationalist spectrum as well, and to expand to

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[215] Hansen and Jaffrelot, *The BJP After the 1996 Elections*, 1-21. In addition, Jaffrelot, *The Sangh Parivar between Sanskritization and Social Engineering*, 22-70 shows the development of social profile of BJS and BJP between 1954 and 1996.

[216] Thomas Blom Hansen, "The Vernacularisation of Hindutva: The BJP and Shiv Sena in Rural Maharashtra," *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 30, no. 2 (1996) and Thomas Blom Hansen, "BJP and the Politics of Hindutva in Maharashtra," *The BJP and the Compulsion of Politics in India*, eds. Thomas Blom Hansen and Christophe Jaffrelot (Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1998), 121-162, give the example of the state of Maharashtra and depicts how the BJP built a coalition with another nationalistic party on the state level, acted as a Hindu nationalistic party but shaped its image to be a honorable and moderate nationalistic alternative to the Congress.

states outside of the Hindu heartland. "The differentiated trajectories of the BJP in different states since the late 1980s have made it abundantly clear that the continuing momentum of Hindu nationalism in Indian politics is becoming regionalized."[217]

But, with the success of the BJP on the regional and state level, the BJP had to face another set of problems besides the discussion about the right course for a Hindu nationalistic party. One major factor for the success of the BJP was the party's discipline and the integrity of the Hindu nationalist workers on the grass roots level. One base of this discipline was the homogeneous voter base of the BJP. With opening of the BJP to other castes and classes, the voter base lost its unity and diverse interests had to be reconciled. Yet, after gaining power in some states, party discipline eroded to a degree and some party officials were accused of corruption after obtaining official government posts. In addition to this, the BJP had to face the problem that voters remember election promises and present the ruling party the bill when these promises are not fulfilled.[218] With its success, the BJP had to take part in the reality of India's political system.

However, besides these factors of change of the BJP party image, the long lasting effects for the BJP were tremendous. The BJP became established as one of the two leading parties of the country. It was not any longer a minor figure in the Indian party system, but an opponent of the Congress that had to be taken seriously. Therefore, the role of the BJP in future is either the leading party in a coalition to rule India or the leading opposition party in the Lok Sabha. The party's success makes the BJP in the

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[217] Hansen, *The Vernacularisation of Hindutva: The BJP and Shiv Sena in Rural Maharashtra*, 177, 178. See for different BJP's strategies in Indian states as well Hansen and Jaffrelot, *The BJP After the 1996 Elections*, 1-21. Rob Jenkins, "Rajput Hidutva, Caste Politics, Regional Identity and the Hindu Nationalism in Contemporary Rajasthan" in *The BJP and the Compulsion of Politics in India*, eds. Thomas Blom Hansen and Christophe Jaffrelot (Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1998), 101-120. James Manor, "Southern Discomfort: The BJP in Karnataka" In *The BJP and the Compulsion of Politics in India*, eds. Thomas Blom Hansen and Christophe Jaffrelot (Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1998), 163-201. Gurharpal Singh, "The Akalis and the BJP in Punjab: From Ayodhya to the 1997 Legislative Assembly Election" in *The BJP and the Compulsion of Politics in India*, eds. Thomas Blom Hansen and Christophe Jaffrelot (Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1998), 228-242. Shah, *The BJP's Riddle in Gujarat: Caste, Factionalism and Hindutva*, 243-266.

[218] Jaffrelot, *Setback to BJP*, 129-137 and Christophe Jaffrelot, "BJP and the Challenge of Factionalism in Madhya Pradesh," *The BJP and the Compulsion of Politics in India*, eds. Thomas Blom Hansen and Christophe Jaffrelot (Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1998), 267-290, give an example of this BJP-problem for the state of Madhya Pradesh.

future as attractive as the Congress as an ally for interest groups and minor parties in the diverse and heterogeneous party system of India.[219]

As a result of its more moderate rhetoric, the BJP gained 120 seats in the Lok Sabha election of 1996 and became the strongest party in parliament. According to Hansen, "For the first time in 1996, the BJP increased its share of representatives in the Lok Sabha through a rather moderate campaign and limited alliances with regional parties."[220] Vajpayee received the mandate to form a government. But, after thirteen days, he resigned as Prime Minister because he could not find enough support for his government. According to Kantha, the main reason for this "… was the lack of credibility on the part of the party to live up to its agreement."[221] Due to the fact of the positive result of the Lok Sabha election in 1996, the BJP did not change course and rhetoric until the Lok Sabha election in 1998. The BJP manifesto for the elections in 1998 was more moderate than its statements of the previous elections. "The BJP campaigned on a law and order ticket, promising stable and honest government after years of Congress and UF misrule."[222]

2.   The BJP in Indian Government 1998–2004

In March 1998, when the BJP won 182 seats in the Lok Sabha election, Vajpayee was able to form a government. The BJP in 1998 was still a party that was strongly supported by the upper caste, but the party was able to expand its voter base. Between 1991 and 1998, it shifted gradually away from the upper caste to other communities, especially to the Other Backward Castes (OBC's). Even a higher number of Muslims voted for the BJP. Therefore, the social structure of the BJP of 1998 had little in common with the BJS of the years before 1980. In addition to this, with aid of allied parties, the

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[219] One example for this trend is the support of the BJP by the Akali Dal, a primary Sikh party in Punjab. See Singh, *The Akalis and the BJP in Punjab: From Ayodhya to the 1997 Legislative Assembly Election*, 228-242.

[220] Hansen and Jaffrelot, *The BJP After the 1996 Elections*, 1.

[221] Kantha, *General Elections, 1996: BJP Politics: Looking Beyond the Impasse*, 3097.

[222] Corbridge, *'The Militarization of all Hindudom'? the Bharatiya Janata Party, the Bomb, and the Political Spaces of Hindu Nationalism*, 245.

BJP was able to expand geographically from the Hindu heartland into other states.[223] In 1998, the BJP ruled in eight states of India. This expansion was possible just with support of other allied parties. Therefore, the success of the BJP became dependent on the support of allied parties. "If the allies were to let go then in all likelihood the BJP would have a long way to fall."[224]

Shortly after gaining power, the BJP led government demonstrated strength towards Pakistan and India by testing three nuclear bombs on 11 May 1998 and two nuclear bombs two days later. One can argue that this testing was just a reaction to the testing of a Pakistani Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile capable of carrying nuclear warheads in April 1998,[225] but according to Aijaz, it was, as well, an offensive sign to the international community, especially towards China and Pakistan, that India was a strong military nuclear power. "From the opening of the propaganda offensive by Defense Minister Fernandes in early April 1998 to Prime Minister Vajpayee's letter to Clinton after the explosions, the BJP government has maintained its focus on China as the strategic adversary that threatens India's security directly and as the main culprit behind Pakistan's nuclear capability, not to speak of the threat it is said to pose through Myanmar."[226] Remarkable for western observers was that the BJP government took action of this magnitude by testing the nuclear bombs without any national debate, consulting allies or informing neighbors prior to the tests. One can see, with this, the same pattern of behavior as in the Ayodhya case. It is marked by announcing a specific strong action, using it as a symbol, and carrying it out without any further discussion in order to demonstrate hawkishness. Only after this creation of hard facts is the BJP ready to discuss the case (of a temple in Ayodhya or of the proliferation of nuclear weapons).[227] To underpin this new strength, the BJP "…has also boosted India's military

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[223] Heath, *Anatomy of BJP's Rise to Power: Social, Regional and Political Expansion in 1990s*, 2511-2517 and Jaffrelot, *The Sangh Parivar between Sanskritization and Social Engineering*, 22-70.

[224] Heath, *Anatomy of BJP's Rise to Power: Social, Regional and Political Expansion in 1990s*, 2511-2517, Hansen, Hasan and Jaffrelot, *Short Cuts to Power*, 315-332 contain a graph with a detailed analysis of BJ's votes and votes for BJP's allies in the different states (on pages 324-325).

[225] Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee mentioned this in a letter to U.S. President Clinton.

[226] Aijaz Ahmad, *Lineages of the Present: Ideology and Politics in Contemporary South Asia*, 240.

[227] Ibid, 242-247.

presence along the Line of Control in Kashmir, and in the eyes of Pakistan it has made threatening noises about the status of Azad [Free] Kashmir."[228] And, additionally, it has increased the defense expenditures by 14 per cent and the expenditures for atomic energy by 80 per cent in the first BJP budget.[229]

In sum, the BJP government demonstrated India's strength and gave an international and domestic signal of the self-confidence of the new Hindu government.[230]

But foreign policy issues were not decisive for the course of the BJP, even in the case of the relationship towards Pakistan. This signal of strength was necessary for the BJP for domestic reasons because the BJP ruled India in a coalition with a minority government, which had acted ineptly and needed support from outside of the coalition.[231] The testing of the nuclear bombs brought the BJP this support and consolidated the position of the BJP in the short run. Especially after the testing of six Pakistani nuclear bombs on 28 and 30 May 1998, the support for the BJP's decision to test the bomb increased in public and in parliament where only "… few MP's dared to challenge the BJP's decision to carry out the weapon tests."[232] With the testing of the bombs, the BJP changed its Hindu nationalism into an Indian nationalism to gain support of all Indians. Aijaz argues that "For the BJP to graduate from 'Hindu' nationalism to 'Indian' nationalism, and thus to become a nationally hegemonic power, it too must undergo this baptism of fire."[233] However, it followed along the lines of Hindu nationalism, because

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[228] Corbridge, *'the Militarization of all Hindudom'? the Bharatiya Janata Party, the Bomb, and the Political Spaces of Hindu Nationalism*, 242.

[229] The article of Vinod Vyasulu, "BJP's First Budget: The Pluses and Minuses," *Economic and Political Weekly* 33, no. 23 (June 6-12, 1998), 1362-1367, offers an overview of the first budget under BJP's rule.

[230] For the BJP's perception see C. P. Thakur and Devendra P. Sharma, *India Under Atal Behari Vajpayee: The BJP Era* (New Delhi: UBS Publishers' Distributors Ltd., 1999), 375. (the book is written by a BJP supporter)

[231] Sumit Sarkar, "The BJP Bomb and Aspects of Nationalism," *Economic and Political Weekly* 33, no. 27 (July 4-10, 1998), 1726.

[232] Corbridge, *'The Militarization of all Hindudom'? the Bharatiya Janata Party, the Bomb, and the Political Spaces of Hindu Nationalism*, 244.

[233] Aijaz Ahmad, *Lineages of the Present: Ideology and Politics in Contemporary South Asia*, 244.

the decision-making process in the inner circle of BJP and RSS could be judged as a sign of militaristic authoritarianism and as a "… move towards implementing the 'following one leader' principle on a national scale."[234]

The second major topic for the new BJP government was the economy. According to Yadav, "The new government quietly and willingly set about the task of continuing the economic policies initiated by its Congress predecessors. When the BJP finally came to power, it sped up the pace of changes, perhaps somewhat brazenly."[235] However, the attempts to reform the economy were overall half-hearted. The BJP's ideology and its belief in India's self-determination, even in economic issues, prevented the government from following a long lasting reform course according to the recommendations of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. For the RSS and the BJP hardliners, the influence of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund was nothing more than a kind of neo-colonialism. Economic issues were therefore part of the ongoing discussion inside the BJP about the right course for the party. This discussion hampered the party's solving of the economic problems of India. Finally, intrigues within the coalition were decisive for the breakdown of the coalition in 1999. Despite these domestic problems during the first years of ruling India, the BJP became stronger in the 1999 elections and gained power again. The BJP gained 182 seats and formed a coalition with some other parties in 1999, called the National Democratic Alliance. Together they held 300 seats in the Lok Sabah.

Yet, domestic issues were not decisive for the success of the BJP in the 1999 election. It was the Kargil War and the positive result for India that were crucial for the BJP. The Kargil War demonstrated, in the eyes of the voters, that the BJP was a guarantor to ensure India's security. The Kargil War demonstrated also that the BJP government acted responsibly towards Pakistan. Although the Indian government reacted to a Muslim intrusion into an area of Kashmir (district of Kargil) with massive use of regular Indian land and air forces, the government limited the intervention to the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. Despite the obvious fact that the intruders were Pakistani,

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[234] Sarkar, *The BJP Bomb and Aspects of Nationalism*, 1726.

[235] Yadav and Palshikar, *Party System and Electoral Politics in the Indian States, 1952-2002: From Hegemony to Convergence*, 101.

the BJP government did not use the incident to expand the military mission between India and Pakistan. Instead of this, the BJP government acted responsibly, stopped the advance of the Indian troops at the Line of Control (LOC) and prevented an escalation of the conflict into a war between India and Pakistan. Even more, the Indian government did not cut off the Lahore Bus Service between India and Pakistan opened just before the Kargil War, and still tried to normalize the connection to Pakistan. In sum, the BJP was able to use the Kargil War to increase its foreign reputation

After the Kargil War, India's foreign policy towards Pakistan was almost consistent with the foreign policy of the former Indian governments, yet stronger in execution of measures. The BJP government increased its defense expenditures and its behavior towards Pakistan was characterized by a mixture of self-confident strength and responsible pragmatism. The strong, but not over-escalating foreign policy was seen, for example, in the cases of the Atlantique incident[236] in 1999 and in the attack on the Indian parliament in 2001. [237] However, despite tensions between India and Pakistan, the United States of America in September 2001 removed sanctions against India (and Pakistan) which were imposed after the nuclear tests in 1998. But this measure was not a sign of recognition of India's foreign policy. Rather, it was a reaction to the incident of September 11, 2001 and a means to improve the American footprint in South Asia for the fight against terrorism. Tensions between India and Pakistan were still intense. Especially, infiltrations and suicide attacks in the Kashmir region meant a security threat for India's government. As a consequence, the numbers of troops in the Kashmir region were at a peak, and according to Saez, by end of May "… Indian government officials openly discussed the possibility of crossing the LOC and launching air strikes against

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[236] On August 10, 1999, India shot down a Pakistani Breguet Atlantique aircraft. India claimed that the aircraft violated India's airspace. Pakistan denied this and judged the shot down as an unnecessary and hostile act. India's government did not used this incident for further actions towards Pakistan. For more information, see: http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Atlantique_Incident.

[237] On December 13, 2001 five well-armed Kashmirii militants attacked the Indian Parliament in a suicide attack. No member of parliament was killed, but several persons (including all attackers) were killed or wounded. The Indian government blamed Pakistan for the attack, cut off the rail and bus connections to Pakistan and increased the number of troops in the Kashmir region.

suspected terrorist camps in Pakistan-held Kashmir."[238] Only U.S. intervention could impel India to reduce the number of troops in Kashmir.[239] However, in 2003, the BJP government changed course and offered Pakistan the establishment of diplomatic relations and took some steps to defuse the Kashmir problem ("composite dialogue"). Yet, the reason for this change was less a shift of its principal policy regarding the Indian position towards Kashmir or Pakistan than a mixture of pressure from the outside (United States) and from the inside. India's strategy of a "coercive diplomacy," the imposing of political changes by military threat, had proved unsuccessful. India's elite, especially the business class, criticized the BJP government for its costly mobilizing of the army on the Pakistani border for ten months during the years 2001 and 2002 without gaining any major concessions from Pakistan.

The fight against terrorism was also a major domestic topic for the BJP government. The government enacted a new law of Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance (POTO) which was controversial "… because it allowed the executive to intercept various communications protocols."[240] The BJP tried to demonstrate strength both on the international level and on the domestic level. At the same time, the BJP tried to present itself as a party for all Indians. The nomination of A. J. P. Abdul Kalam, a Muslim and architect of India's nuclear program, for president was one example of this dual strategy. Nevertheless, the domestic situation of the BJP was still marked by discussions about the right course for the party and contradictions inside the ruling coalition. The reshuffling of the cabinet was one obvious indicator of this discussion.

The overall center-oriented politics of the BJP on the national level could not hide the fact that the BJP still pursued a Hindu nationalistic agenda. Over the whole period that the BJP ruled India, discussions about the right course for the BJP went on and

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[238] Lawrence Sáez, "India in 2002: The BJP's Faltering Mandate and the Morphology of Nuclear War," *Asian Survey* 43, no. 1, A Survey of Asia in 2002 (January–February 2003), 189.

[239] Ibid.

[240] Ibid., 191.

hardliners in the BJP and the Hindu nationalistic network used any weakness of the moderate wing of the BJP to put some classical Hindutva themes back at the top of the party's agenda.

These Hindutva orientated politics became obvious in domestic policies, namely in the BJP ruled states like Gujarat. In 2002, when Gujarat was ruled by Chief Minister Narendra Modi, riots between Hindus and Muslims broke out and led to the death of several hundred people, mostly Muslims. The BJP ruled government did not intervene to prevent the violence and the Chief Minister was accused of being involved in the planning of the riots.[241] Another example happened in 2005 in Gujarat when it became public that in schoolbooks the ideology of National Socialism and the idea of one dominant race were glorified. Not only in Gujarat had the BJP tried to manipulate the writing of history in the sense of Savarkar's Hindutva. In contrast to the crude Hindu nationalistic rhetoric of the mid 1980s, the BJP's course of action was in this phase more indirect and hidden. And, as a consequence of the change in India's political system, Hindu nationalistic politics was shifted from the center to the state level. But, by end of 2002, the BJP ruled only in four Indian states.

After four years of ruling India, the BJP led coalition of 22 parties (named the National Democratic Alliance – NDA) opted for fresh elections in 2004. The reasons were domestic issues and the conviction of the BJP leadership that they would win the elections. But, the opposite happened. The BJP, and especially its allies, underperformed and lost power. The BJP won 138 of 543 seats in the Lok Sabha. Different reasons led to this development. **First**, the Congress was able to stop its decline, consolidate its power, exploit the public perception that economic liberalization under the BJP was seen as benefitting a relatively narrow segment of the Indian population, and performed better with its allies than in 1999. **Second**, the BJP lost some support of the higher castes. **Third**, due to the fact of the increasing fragmentation of India's party system, the success of the two major parties (BJP and Congress) became highly dependent on the success of their allies on the state levels. The success of minor parties at the state level was

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[241] Lawrence Sáez, "India in 2002: The BJP's Faltering Mandate and the Morphology of Nuclear War," *Asian Survey* 43, no. 1, A Survey of Asia in 2002 (January–February 2003).

dependent on short-term issues caused by these parties.[242] Besides the inner party discussion about the course of the BJP, therefore, the leadership of the BJP had to face the additional problem of coordinating its policy with allies who differed in ideology, orientation and perspective. To be successful in ruling India, the BJP had to develop a policy of adjustment and compromise. But this policy had the disadvantages that the BJP lost a part of its reputation as a strong party with a strong leadership. In addition to this, the BJP government failed to improve the welfare of the Indian population and therefore lost some of its spirit as well.[243]

Another factor of Indian society especially hampered the BJP in gaining more votes. Dasgupta points out that the Hindu nationalistic voter base was not as stable as it seemed from the outside. "Hindu or non-Hindu identity is unnecessary and irrelevant for the political community to cohere or prosper. Citizens can draw on repertoires of identity available to them. Allegiance is a political creation."[244] So, the BJP could no longer trust in a certain voter base but had to compete even with small new parties on the state level for voters with affection for the BJP ideology.

3.   The BJP as Opposition Party 2004–2008

After the BJP's defeat in the Lok Sabah elections of 2004, the BJP did not change course significantly. The party strategy of the years 1998–2004 was, in principle, successful and established the BJP as one of the two major parties on a national level in India.

The party strategy can be described as dual because it pursues two different courses. The primary course of the BJP is to present the BJP as a responsible centrist

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[242] For more details see: Steven I. Wilkinson, "Reading the Election Results" in *The State of India's Democracy*, eds. Sumit Ganguly, Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 26-44.

[243] Ramashray Roy, "The Text and Context of the 2004 Lok Sabha Elections in India," *India's 2004 Elections. Grass-Roots and National Perspectives*, eds. Ramashray Roy and Paul Wallace (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2007), 9-3. To the mismatch between the electoral promises of the BJP and its performance, see Pramod Kumar, "Contextualizing Religious, Caste and Regional Dynamics in Electoral Politics: Emerging Paradoxes" in *India's 2004 Elections. Grass-Roots and National Perspectives*, eds. Ramashray Roy and Paul Wallace (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2007), 58-75.

[244] Jyotirindra Dasgupta, "Of Hindus and their Nationalisms: Religion, Representation, and Democracy," *India's 2004 Elections. Grass-Roots and National Perspectives*, eds. Ramashray Roy and Paul Wallace (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2007), 104.

alternative to the Congress, especially on the national level. The secondary course, on the state level, depends on the voter base in the individual states. In states of the Hindu heartland, the BJP can still act as a strong Hindu nationalistic party. Yet, in other states, as well as on the national level, the BJP has to adapt to a more moderate course. With this dual strategy, the BJP has been, until now, very successful. In 2007, it won in the states of Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh, and with its surprising victory in the state of Karnataka in May 2008 (BJP won 110 of 224 seats), the BJP was for the first time able to form a state government in the south of India.[245] And, interestingly enough, the BJP was able to win 16 of 21 seats in Bangalore city, India's most important and highly developed IT centre. However, according to Thakurta, "… the manner in which the party responded to the defeat in the 2004 Lok Sabha elections shows quite clearly that the tendency to keep returning to the Hindutva plank whenever the BJP sees itself as facing a crisis is far from being a thing of the past."[246]

And, once again, the BJP gained advantages from the weakness of the Congress which was not able to solve the economic problems of India. "Although the BJP is still far from a unified force, it is likely to profit both from the worsening economic conditions that seem certain to mar the final months of the UPA government's term and from anti-incumbency sentiment that characterises Indian voting patterns."[247]

For the 2009 Lok Sabha elections, the BJP has chosen the fight against terrorism as the key for its election campaign and chosen the slogan "Save India." With this focus on national security, the BJP presents itself once again as a party of law and order and Hindu Indian strength. And, once again, it puts its hopes in gaining voters from the urban middle class.

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[245] For a comparison of the recent results in the state of Karnataka with the results until 1996 see Manor, *Southern Discomfort: The BJP in Karnataka*, 163-201.

[246] Thakurta and Raghuraman, *Divided we Stand. India in a Time of Coalitions*, 214.

[247] India politics: Outlook – Who will form the next government? 2008. *EIU ViewsWire*. August 8, New York. http://www.proquest.com/ (accessed November 16, 2008).

4.   Summary

The BJP's politics, during the time frame of 1980 to 2008, were characterized by a remarkable sense of pragmatism and adaptability. The general challenge for the BJP was to maintain its Hindu nationalistic identity yet gain power by attracting non-Hindu nationalistic voters. The experiences of the years of the Ayodhya campaign showed that a crude Hindu nationalistic rhetoric strengthens the Hindu nationalistic party identity and ensures the votes of the staunch supporters, but frightens off the majority. On the other hand, the debacle of 1984 showed that the BJP needs a clear profile to distinguish itself from the Congress. With its manifesto for the election of 1998, the BJP found the appropriate course of action out of this dilemma.

Without losing its identity as a Hindu nationalist party, the BJP represented itself as moderate and as an alternative to the Congress. They were able to do this by covering up the means for spreading Hindu nationalistic topics, renouncing the use of crude Hindu nationalistic rhetoric and appealing to the Indian nationalistic feelings of the people. With this, they created a kind of Janus-headed Hindu nationalistic party. In public, Hindu nationalism is used only selectively by the BJP as a means to ensure support from its own voter base. Represented as Indian nationalism, the BJP used Hindu nationalistic ideas to distinguish the BJP from the Congress. But the ties to the RSS still exist and, as the example of Gujarat shows, subliminally the BJP is still trying to change the society of India in the sense of a Hindu nationalism and Hindutva.

Yet, the flexibility of the BJP shows that even the Hindutva ideology could be interpreted as flexible by Hindu nationalists. Despite its roots, the BJP after 1998 is depicted not as the rigid force explained by Golwalkar and others in the RSS. After 1998, it had a modern face, attractive for nearly all citizens of India. Therefore, the BJP developed into a powerful opposition to the Congress. Still, in 1989, Chhibber and Petrocik argued that no "… comparable national opposition can emerge because there is no national position for any party to oppose, and no regional opponent enjoys a national resource comparable to Congress's history as the party which brought independence."[248]

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[248] Pradeep K. Chhibber and John R. Petrocik, "The Puzzle of Indian Politics: Social Cleavages and the Indian Party System," *British Journal of Political Science* 19, no. 2 (April 1989), 207.

And they used the BJP as an example of a nationwide operating party competitive only within regional boundaries. They called the BJP a "Hindi-heartland party"[249] But the rise of the BJP has disproved this argument. The BJP was able to rise and to establish itself as an opposition force not for historical merits but because it creates a new Hindu-Indian history which starts in ancient times and not in the year 1947. And, it was able to expand its voter base to areas other then the Hindu heartland. In addition to this, the BJP has, in comparison to the Congress, the advantage of having a loyal voter base of Hindu nationalists. In contrast to the BJP, the Congress and its allies never developed a common doctrine or ideology on the basis of Indian secularism. According to Seal, "Those who have convinced themselves that India is the home of spiritual values have found them everywhere in her politics; others have seen nothing but homo homini lupus."[250]

But the result of the 2004 election showed the limits of the BJP politics within the changing party system of India. The trend towards a state orientated policy and the pressure to build coalitions hampered the BJP from succeeding with a pure Hindu nationalistic policy on the national level. It shattered the myth of a strong Hindu nationalistic leadership and made the BJP more vulnerable than the Congress. Additionally, it showed that the Hindutva ideology neither replaced the idea of a Western style secular Indian nation nor remained anchored in the whole of Indian society. Dasgupta argues, "A disaggregated analysis will reveal the danger of drawing inference regarding coherence or solidarity associated with any major religious community. Relative schism, solidarity, inclusion, exclusion, and other processes within these communities change over time in ways that census mechanisms in India can rarely respond to."[251]

However, the discontinuities in BJP politics have not been caused by a general shift in BJP's party politics. Despite discussions within the BJP and between the BJP leadership and the RSS/VHP about the right course for the BJP, the general ideological foundation and the ties to the Hindu nationalistic network are still, today, untouched.

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[249] Chhibber and Petrocik, "The Puzzle of Indian Politics," 208.

[250] Anil Seal, "Imperialism and Nationalism in India," *Modern Asian Studies* 7, no. 3 (1973), 345.

[251] Dasgupta, *Of Hindus and their Nationalisms: Religion, Representation, and Democracy*, 77.

Moreover, the strong ties between the BJP and the Sangh Parivar prevents the BJP from developing towards a centrist party.[252] And, any judgment about BJP politics has to differentiate between BJP rhetoric (and its change over time) and practical BJP politics (on the national level and on the state level). Or, as Hansen argues, "Political parties do not change their identity without changing their core commitments. In this context it is important to distinguish between tactical shifts and strategic ideological transformation."[253] Until today, the BJP has shifted tactics in order to gain or hold power but has not changed its ideology and strategy.

Decisive reasons for the moderate BJP rhetoric on the national level when gaining power were the increasing fragmentation of Indian politics, the increasing self-confidence of the marginalized groups of society and the compulsion to build coalitions.

The BJP's politics is influenced by allies in the coalition and is dependent on coalition partners. But the discontinuities of BJP's party politics and the moderate influence of the Hindutva ideology on the national level and on India's foreign policy were not caused just by the necessity of coalition building. They are, as well, a consequence of the special characteristics of the Indian political system. According to van Dyke, "Parties which are opposed to each other on the state level may form coalitions together at the Center, while Indian states themselves demonstrate a great diversity in the configuration of their political party system.…"[254] This general trend affected the BJP also. The BJP formed state and national level coalitions with different partners who were distinguished widely by ideology and party politics.

Two general explanations are possible for this paradox of coalition building despite ideological differences. **First**, ideology and ideological differences do not play as important a role for parties in India as they play in Western democracies. If this explanation is true, one can assume that gaining power (and patronage) is the primary goal of Indian parties and politicians even when this will lead to denying a party's

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[252] Basu, *The Transformation of Hindu Nationalism?* 391.

[253] Hansen, Hasan and Jaffrelot, *Short Cuts to Power*, 330-331.

[254] Virginia van Dyke, "'Jumbo Cabinets,' Factionalism, and the Impact of Federalism: Comparing Coalition Governments in Kerala, Punjab, and Uttar Pradesh" in *India's 2004 Elections. Grass-Roots and National Perspectives*, eds. Ramashray Roy and Paul Wallace (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2007), 117-118.

convictions. On the one hand, this could be assessed as a sign of a decline in the morality of politicians. On the other hand, one can argue that the Hindu nationalistic ideology is nothing other than a means to gain voters, but is not to be taken seriously as a practical matter for politics. **Second**, the BJP ideology is meanwhile widespread in India and a common ideology and marks no decisive difference between the different parties which could make cooperation impossible. If this explanation is true, the Hindu nationalists were at least partly successful in changing Indian society towards a Hindu nationalistic attitude. And, one has to be doubtful about the way of Indian democracy and secularism in the future.

Besides the trend to form coalitions, another development of the Indian political system influenced the course of the BJP's politics. The development towards more federalism led to the fact that factionalism became common all over India. It is not surprising that the BJP's ideology of Hindutva could not play the decisive role in national domestic and international politics, even under a BJP led government. The coordination with the higher number of small state level based parties inside of a coalition, and the different agreements between the BJP and regional parties on the state level, led to the consequence that state level topics became dominant over a theoretical Hindu nationalistic ideology. On a single state level, especially in states of the Hindu heartland, a situation may totally differ from the national level because of the possible predominant influence of politics oriented on ethnic lines. However, this is a question for another examination.

B. THE AYODHYA CASE AS A DOMESTIC ISSUE OF HINDU NATIONALISM

1. Muslims and Hindus in India

On December 6, 1992, a group of approximately 150,000 Hindu Nationalists destroyed the Babri mosque in Ayodhya. In the aftermath of the demolition of the Babri mosque, riots between Muslims and Hindus occured all over India. As a result, more then 2,000 people were killed. The riots resulting from the events in Ayodhya were the beginning of a phase of increasing tensions between Hindus and Muslims in India. With

regard to the violence in the aftermath of the partition of India and Pakistan, one may argue that tension between Hindus and Muslims is part of Indian history. But different examinations show that violence between Hindus and Muslims existed after 1950 on an acceptable level for a multiethnic society,[255] but increased again in the 1980s when Hindu nationalism rose. Jaffrelot underpins the importance of this development by arguing, "This phenomenon is a challenging one for social scientists in so far as the essential characteristics of Hinduism scarcely lend themselves to a closed and monolithic radicalism of the type associated with Muslim, Jewish or Christian 'fundamentalism.'"[256]

With about 13.4% of India's population, Muslims are a minority. The Muslim population is spread over India. There are only a few settlement areas with a Muslim concentration (as the the state of Jammu and Kashmir). Yet with a number of about 138 million, India comprises the second largest Muslim population in the world (after Indonesia). Muslims belong mostly to India's lower classes. They have a high poverty rate (especially in urban areas), their literacy rate is below the national average, and their representation in the government is about four percent lower than their share of the population.[257]

Despite their large numbers, it is difficult to talk about the Muslims as a single, unified player with one interest in India or in the Ayodhya conflict. In contrast to the organization of the Hindu nationalists, the Muslims in India were loosely organized and focused on local issues. Different Muslim organizations work independently and are not able to form a common opinion of Muslims in India. Especially differences between

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[255] Muni, *Ethnic Conflict, Federalism, and Democracy in India*, 183 shows as the official data for 1955: 75 communal incidents, 24 people killed and 475 people injured. These numbers increased until 1985: 525 communal incidents, 328 persons killed, 3,665 persons injured. Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India*, 87-111 shows different data sets for the national and the state level. Her data correspond with the official data but go into more detail. She shows for example that most of the riots took place in urban areas. In contrast to this, rural areas were spared by riots.

[256] Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*, 1.

[257] Data are from the census of India. Census of India, "Census Data of India," http://www.censusindia.gov.in (accessed January 01, 2009). For more details see the report of the Prime Minister's High Level Committee Cabinet Secretariat Government of India from November, 2006 about the "Social, Economic and Educational Status of the Muslim Community of India." Available on Government of India (Cabinet Secretariat) and Prime Minister's High Level Committee for Preparation of Report on Social, Economic and Educational Status of the Muslim Community of India, "**Status of the Muslim Community in India**," http://www.sabrang.com/cc/archive/2007/jan07/lettertoPM.pdf (accessed January 01, 2009).

orthodox and modern Muslims prevent the development of strong and united organizations. Orthodox Muslims try to expand special rights for Muslims whereas modern Muslims put more emphasis on the secularism of the Indian state and the integration of Muslims into the state. Even in the political realm, Muslims are unable to create a Muslim party on the national level. Historically, India's Muslims mainly tried to influence the politics of the Congress in order to gain advantages. Only one Muslim party operated in some states of India.

Muslims in India did not differ from the Hindus just because of religion. According to Talbot, "The Muslim warriors of Turkic origin who invaded and settled in peninsular India were certainly a separate ethnic group, comprising their own social unit and possessing their own culture. But their "Otherness" included many distinct features beyond simply religion – language, costume, marriage customs and fighting styles, to name a few."[258] But, despite these distinct features, Hindus and Muslims had developed a high number of concurrent social practices and beliefs since the fourteenth century.[259] "Contemporary historians of India do not even agree on whether or not here existed before the nineteenth century anything that could be called Hindu or Muslim communal identities, and, a fortiori, on whether or not Hindu-Muslim conflict was endemic."[260] And, it is doubtful as well whether a Muslim identity existed in India in the mid 1980's. With this, Muslims in India did not primarily feel Muslim, but Indian with some distinctions in comparison to the Hindu majority.

In the mid 1980s, these distinctions became more important with the decline of the Congress, which lost its ability to be the unifying power for all groups of society. This marked the end of the one-party dominance in India and opened the gate for individual groups to increase the pressure on political parties in order to gain influence and patronage as a service in return for votes. Therefore, the pressure some Muslim

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[258] Cynthia Talbot, "Inscribing the Other, Inscribing the Self: Hindu-Muslim Identities in Pre-Colonial India," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 37, no. 4 (October 1995), 692-722.

[259] J. J. Roy Burman, "Hindu-Muslim Syncretism in India," *Economic and Political Weekly* 31, no. 20 (May 18, 1996), 1211-1215.

[260] Paul R. Brass, *The Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence in Contemporary India* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 25.

organizations put on the government in order to increase minority rights for the Muslims was not a sign of Islamization, but a reaction to a change in the political system of India and the concomitant sense of an increasing threat to Muslims in India.[261]

This explains why tensions on this scale between Muslims and Hindus had not broken out earlier and were limited to some parts of India.[262] Muslims and Hindus were not enemies, per se, but they became opponents due to the new definition of Hinduism. The definition of Muslims as "the Other" became the new unifying source for Hindu India. According to Vanaik, "Hindus can now hopefully be united not by what they are supposed to share but what they oppose, even to the point of hostility."[263] In addition to this, for the Hindu nationalists, the new definition of Hinduism was a means to reaffirm the nation's cultural identity. Thus, it is clear that a primordial argument about an eternal hostility between Muslims and Hindus is not useful as an explanation for tensions between Hindus and Muslims. Instead, political entrepreneurs constructed hostilities by appealing to and widening existing fault lines of society. The definition of the Muslims as "the Other" was just a means used by Hindu nationalists to support the social construct of a new kind of Hinduism.

2.   The Historical Background of the Ayodhya Case

The Babri mosque was built, probably in the sixteenth century, by order of the first Mughal emperor of India, Babur.[264] The Hindus believe that the Babri mosque was built on the ruins of a Hindu temple which had been destroyed by a Muslim commander in chief. Many Hindus believe that the temple was built to commemorate the birthplace of *Rama* the king of Ayodhya[265] and avatar (reincarnation) of the Hindu god *Vishnu.*

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[261] See for an example of this development Janet E. Benson, "Politics and Muslim Ethnicity in South India," *Journal of Anthropological Research* 39, no. 1 (Spring 1983), 42-59.

[262] An examination by Chhibber, Misra and Sisson shows that 75% of the respondents did not observe any conflict among religions in their locality, 8% saw conflict and consensus and 17% recognized just conflict. And even in Uttar Pradesh, 64% of the respondents did not observe any conflict among religions Pradeep K. Chhibber, Subhash Misra and Richard Sisson, "Order and the Indian Electorate: For Whom does Shiva Dance?" *Asian Survey* 32, no. 7 (July 1992), 610-613.

[263] Vanaik, *Communalization of Indian Polity*, 183.

[264] The exact date of construction is disputed.

[265] To this history see van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism: Hindus and Muslims in India*, 152-162.

Vishnu is in the *trimurti* ("Hindiu triad" or "great trinity") of Hinduism, the preserver, while *Brahma* is the creator and *Shiva* is the destroyer.

Ayodhya is one of the seven holy towns of India, lies in the Indian State of Uttar Pradesh, has a population of 80,000 and many mosques and Hindu temples. The Babri mosque was the largest mosque in Ayodhya. In the past, it had been used as a house of worship by Muslims and by Hindus as well. Between 1853 and 1855, the first riots between Muslims and Hindus were noted when Hindus wanted to occupy the mosque and its terrain. After this, the British colonial administration mediated a compromise between Hindus and Muslims. Hindus were prohibited from accessing the inner area of the mosque, but they were allowed to worship in its courtyard. In 1883, the British colonial administration dismissed a request by some Hindus who wanted to build a Hindu temple on the mosque's terrain.

In 1934, Hindu riots led to damage of one of the domes of the mosque. In 1949, someone placed idols of *Rama* and *Sita* (the wife of *Rama*) inside the mosque. As a result, the police administration gave the order to remove the idols. Instead of this, the council of the district of Fayzabad asked the Imam to leave the mosque, and closed it. Only Hindu priests and a limited number of Hindu believers were allowed access to the mosque. In the aftermath of this, Muslims took legal action in order to overturn this decision. Hindus also tried to change the situation by taking legal action as well, but the courts decided to keep the situation unchanged.[266]

3.   The Ayodhya Campaign Since the 1980s

In 1984, the Hindu nationalists, namely the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) started their Ayodhya campaign. They were looking for a new symbol for their political campaigns and found it in the person of Ram. Even when nobody could prove the truth of the story, the legend of Ram and the story of the temple of Ram in Ayodhya were very popular and widespread in India. For the Hindu nationalists, both the fight against the use of the Babri mosque as a mosque, and for construction of a Hindu temple at the birthplace of Ram,

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[266] Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*, 91-96. and Peter van der Veer, "'God must be Liberated!' A Hindu Liberation Movement in Ayodhya," *Modern Asian Studies* 21, no. 2 (1987), 283-301.

was a logical continuation of a centuries old fight of Hindus against Muslims. Because of this, Ram was the ideal figure for Hindu identification. The religious diversity of Hinduism was reduced by making *Ram* a symbol of Hinduism and national unity.[267] Yet, this Hinduism was different from the peaceful Hinduism offered by Mahatma Gandhi and Nehru. According to Corbridge, it was the kind of Hinduism which Savarkar had propagated, "… a Hinduism which could defend the timeless glories of Indian civilizations."[268] And, in addition, by defining the Muslims as the "Others," identification of Hinduism had another cornerstone. First, the campaign was one of processions and pilgrim parties, but in 1986, a district judge decided to open the gates of the mosque in order to allow Hindus to worship there. This decision led to reactions by Muslim organizations, which started to organize peaceful marches to Ayodhya. But, the Muslim planning did not lead to coordinated actions because the Muslims were more focused on the case of Shah Bano, its discussion in public, and the consequences for Muslims in India.

However, the VHP used the opportunity to use this Muslim lack of coordinated action as a signal for expanding the VHP campaign. The VHP emphasized the importance for all Hindus of the birthplace of Ram on this holy ground and expanded the campaign to get more support. And, they declared that marches of Muslims to Ayodhya were to be judged as an attack on Hindu society which would lead to counter measures. The leader of the BJP, Lal Krishan Advani, argued in 1989 that the Ayodhya issue was not simply a dispute, but a symbol of pseudo secularism and appeasement of the minorities.[269]

Although local Muslim and Hindu leaders declared that they could find a peaceful agreement for the use of the area of the Babri mosque, the VHP provoked a confrontation and spread the dispute all over India. The VHP planned to lay the foundation for a new Hindu temple on the site of the Babri mosque in September / October of 1989. This date

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[267] Hansen, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India*, 172-181. Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*, 363-368 and 388-392.

[268] Corbridge, *'The Militarization of all Hindudom'? the Bharatiya Janata Party, the Bomb, and the Political Spaces of Hindu Nationalism*, 235.

[269] Malik and Singh, *Hindu Nationalists in India: The Rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party*, 83.

was planned purposely because elections for the Indian parliament (*Lok Saba*) were also scheduled for the end of 1989. By choosing this date, the VHP carried the dispute into the political arena and put the Indian government under pressure. The VHP thought that it was now a matter for the government to avoid any clash on the site of the Babri mosque by taking a position pro Hinduism. By doing so, the Indian government, and hereby the Indian National Congress (Congress), could prove their efforts in doing something for the Hindu majority, and thus for the majority of the voters of India.[270]

The government of India finally permitted laying the foundation for a Hindu temple about sixty meters from the Babri mosque, but still on the disputed site of the mosque. The VHP promised that no further action would be taken. With this agreement on November 09, 1989, the foundation for a Hindu temple was laid on the site of the Babri mosque. The soft attitude of the Indian government led to further development of the Ayodhya campaign as a cornerstone of the Hindu nationalist movement. In October 1990, the situation escalated again when the VHP announced the beginning of the temple's construction. Prime Minister V.P. Singh made a speech on television and explained that the VHP and BJP rejected his wish for a court decision about the Ayodhya case. The BJP Minister Advani was arrested because of his participation in the Ayodhya campaign. As a result, the BJP withdrew its support for the Janata party ruled government.

Between October 30, 1990, and November 1, 1990, approximately 10,000–40,000 Hindu nationalists tried to reach the site of the Babri mosque. Officially, they wanted to begin the construction of the Ram temple. Probably, they wanted to destroy the mosque in order to build the Ram temple on the former site of the mosque. In a first rush, the Hindu nationalists were able to destroy one dome of the mosque. But, on the following day, the security forces which protected the mosque were able to set the Hindu nationalists back by using armed fire. Because of the ten to one hundred deaths during these incidents, the Hindu nationalists decided to break off the attacks on the mosque. The events on October 30, 1990 and November 01, 1990 were the prelude for the demolition of the Babri mosque on December 06, 1992.

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[270] Hansen, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India*, 181-185.

4.   Explanations

The Ayodhya campaign was part of a process to define Hinduism in a new way and to transform it. Ram and the dispute with the Muslims in Ayodhya were in this sense only symbols for the awakening of a new Hinduism. The Ayodhya movement was part of the Hindu nationalist's campaign to reaffirm the nation's cultural identity and a signal to other political parties to end, in the sense of the BJP, their pseudo secular politics which favored minorities for the sake of a Western style secularism. Yet, BJP officials argued that the Ayodhya campaign was not an anti-Muslim campaign because Hindu nationalists were not per se anti Muslim.[271] The argument offered by Van der Veer after the beginning of the Ayodhya campaign in 1985 is highly applicable. Religious feelings and values do matter, but "… they cannot be divorced from the political processes in which they are produced and managed."[272]

The political processes were the struggle between the Congress and the BJP to gain Hindu votes. Malik argues, "By pitting Ram against Babur, the BJP changed the context of Indian politics. For the majority of Hindus Ram represents the tradition (*maryada*) of Hindu culture; now he became a national symbol. Babur, on the other hand, was an invader and conqueror who expressed dislike for both the people and the country which he had conquered."[273] This shows not just the political dimension of the Ayodhya case, but the underpinnings of the emotional importance for India's Hindus as well.

Additionally, the explanations of the Hindu nationalists show the power of symbols and the way Hindu nationalists combine religion with politics. Religious symbols, for example in the processions of Hindu nationalists, had a tremendous emotional effect on the Hindu population. Due to the combination of ideology and

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[271] See Gurdas M. Ahuja, *BJP and the Indian Politics* (New Delhi: Ram company, 1994), 317-340. Gurdas is a supporter of the BJP.

[272] Van der Veer, *'God must be Liberated!' A Hindu Liberation Movement in Ayodhya*, 300.

[273] Malik and Singh, *Hindu Nationalists in India: The Rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party*, 83.

religion, it was not easy for the authorities of the state to intervene because this could have been judged as being against the religion of the Hindus. In addition to this, the processions had another effect on the connection between Hindus and Muslims. Even in areas were Hindus and Muslims lived normally together in peace and harmony, processions created tensions, and in some cases were the reason for riots between Hindus and Muslims.[274] So, even when the original aim of the processions could not be reached, they led to another result which was in the interest of the VHP, Hindus seeing Muslims as "different" citizens.

In combination with the rhetoric of Hindu nationalists, the processions addressed different groups of Hindus due to political and religious reasons and formed a desire for solidarity among the Hindus.[275] Yet, the Hindu nationalists did not just use traditional religious symbols and religious means like processions. They used modern media, such as videos, as an instrument for political transformation of religious symbols and for manipulation of the people as well.[276] With this combination of religious symbols and modern media as a means to connect the realm of religion with the realm of politics, one aim of the Hindu nationalists became clear. This was the superseding of the secular Indian state by a non-secular Hindu state.

In addition to the religious reasons for the rise of Hinduism, the VHP was able to push this process of transformation and to use the symbol of Ram because since the case of Shah Bano the Muslims had been fragmented into two factions. One was the faction of modern Muslims. The other faction supported traditional Islam under the rule of Sharia. In contrast to the weak and loosely organized religious community of the Muslims, the Hindu nationalist ideology and its network consisting of Hindu nationalist organizations and a Hindu nationalist party had existed since India's independence. According to

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[274] Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*, 392-398.

[275] Banerjee, *Hindutva – Ideology and Social Psychology*, 98.

[276] Christiane Brosius, "Hindutva Intervisuality: Videos and the Politics of Representation," *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 36, no. 1-2 (2002) analyzed one example and showed how the manipulation may affect people. "New meaning is evolved when familiar imagery and narratives are situated in the new or altered context of dichotomies such as crisis and solution, exile/imprisonment and liberation, and stereotypes of 'tolerant Hindus,' 'aggressive Muslims,' the unresponsive state, and so on." Ibid., 292. The importance of modern media to communicate religious beliefs and practices is shown by Peter van der Veer, "Religion in South Asia," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31 (2002), 183-184.

Crawford, the VHP was able to transform "… cultural identity into political identity … ."[277] Without having a strong and united opponent, the division of the Muslims made it easier for the VHP to pursue its goals.

The above-mentioned reasons were not, however, the decisive ones for the successful mobilization of the masses and the outbreak of riots beginning in the late 1980s. The decisive factor was the weakness of the state in combination with a weak ruling party. Indian nationalism was key for the founding and developing of a modern Indian state. But, Indian nationalism was a construct based on the ideas of the leadership of the Congress in order to overcome the difficulties and complexities of the multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic, multi-caste and multi-religious society of India.[278] And this concept of a secular nationalism competed, from the beginning, with another concept of religious Indian nationalism, the Hindu nationalism.[279] The further development and existence of democracy and peace within India was dependent on India's leadership and its ability to bring all groups together, to balance interests and demands and to find acceptable compromises. Snyder shows the importance of elites for the development path of democratizing, but his theoretical explanations end when a country reaches one of four types of nationalism.[280] The case of India shows that the process does not end with establishing one type of nationalism. In India, the Ayodhya case shows that civic nationalism may be change to ethnic nationalism. Civic nationalism can change when elites lose their ability to persuade people of their ideas. Any nationalism, created by elites as a unifying idea to establish democracy, needs an unchallenged and acknowledged leadership to survive during times of crisis in the marketplace of ideas.[281]

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[277] Beverly Crawford, "The Causes of Cultural Conflict: An Institutional Approach" In *The Myth of 'Ethnic Conflict,'* eds. Beverly Crawford and Ronnie Lipschutz (Berkeley: University of California, 1998), 19.

[278] Current data about India can be found on the Website of the Indian census: Census of India, *Census Data of India*. Some selected data, especially in the development of some data over time, can be found in Adeney, *Federalism and Ethnic Conflict Regulation in India and Pakistan*, 238.

[279] Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India*, 55-86.

[280] Snyder, *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict*, 45-91.

[281] Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India*, 74-78 gives an analysis of why the idea of Indian secularism was criticized in the late 1980s and the arguments of the antisecularists. In addition to this, see van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism: Hindus and Muslims in India*, 1-24.

In India, one could argue, it was the elite who lost the ability to protect civic nationalism. And indeed, this would have been true if one could identify such an elite. During the first thirty years of India's history (after independence), the elite could be identified within the Congress. The Congress was equal to the state, ran the country and was the stabilizing factor during the first thirty years of the country. But, the Congress weakened from the first voting out of Indira Gandhi and never regained its old unlimited strength.[282] After 1977, it became clear that the Congress could not any longer be the sole guarantor of a peaceful India. This task has to become a task of the government and hereby of the state institutions.

The Janata party, the successor of the Congress as the ruling party, was not a cohesive party coalition primarily founded in order to beat the Congress. The Congress, which came to power again between 1980 and 1989, was hampered by economic problems, the state government ruled by the BJP, and a bribe affair. Additionally, the Congress acted weakly and unfortunately in religious matters when in power to rule India.[283] According to Banerjee, there was "… a marked contrast between the Indian state's intolerance and suppression of ideas and activities (mainly pursued by minorities – ethnic or religious) that are suspected to be 'secessionist' on the one hand, and its permissive – almost deferential – treatment of propaganda and acts carried out openly by self-proclaimed revivalists of the majority community, which incite violence on religious issues."[284] However, sixty per cent of the Hindu supporters of the destruction of the Babri mosque felt that the Congress-ruled government showed preference for some

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[282] Maya Chadda, *Ethnicity, Security, and Separatism in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 102-122 gives an overview about the reasons why the Congress weakened. Hansen, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India*, 134-153 puts an emphasis on populism during the late years of Indira Gandhi's rule in order to explain the decline of Congress power. Vanaik, *Communalization of Indian Polity*, 173-198 explains the decline of the Congress and the rise of BJP. Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India*, 219-261 shows in some detail the decline of Congress and rise of BJP in two cities.

[283] See for example the Shah Bano case where the Congress government weakened the state by overruling a supreme court decision. See, in addition, the decision of the Indian government to deploy an Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) to support (between 1987 and 1990) the government of Sri Lanka in its fight against the Sri Lankan Tamil nationalists after having supported the Sri Lankan Tamil nationalists before for many years.

[284] Banerjee, *Hindutva – Ideology and Social Psychology*, 97.

groups (Muslims) over others (Hindus).[285] This result, shown in a survey, may be interpreted in two ways. First, it can be interpreted as evidence for the preference of the government for the Muslims, and therefore as a sign for state weakness, because the government was not able to ensure a neutral position towards religion. Second, it could be interpreted as an indicator for the success of the campaign of the Hindu nationalist network to make the Hindus feel threatened by a government which supported minorities.

One additional indicator for the weakness of the state is given by a survey of Chhibber, Misra and Sisson. In 1991, after the election, they asked voters to identify the two most important problems confronting the locality, the state and the nation. As the major recent problem on all three levels, they identified the problem of order / community (47% of the voters on the national level, 50% on the state level and 32% on the local level), and problems of economics ranked on the national level and on the state level in second place (30% on national level, 26% on the state level).[286] Maintaining order and ensuring the security of its citizens is one of the main tasks for any government. The results of the survey show that even in the eyes of Indian voters, the state was weak.

But the detailed evaluation of the data shows that in the state of Uttar Pradesh (where Ayodhya is located), economic/infrastructural problems ranked in place one (45%) and the problem of order and community ranked in place two (45%). Additionally, consensus among religions in Uttar Pradesh was relatively weak with just 64%.[287] This result could lead to the conclusion that economic reasons were one driving factor for religious tensions and the eruption of riots in Ayodhya. But such an argument is too superficial because economic problems in other states also ranked in place one but did not lead to a lack of consensus among religions or riots between religious groups. The

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[285] Pradeep K. Chhibber and Subhash Misra, "Hindus and the Babri Masjid: The Sectional Basis of Communal Attitudes," *Asian Survey* 33, no. 7, South Asia: Responses to the Ayodhya Crisis (July 1993), 670-671.

[286] Chhibber, Misra and Sisson, *Order and the Indian Electorate: For Whom does Shiva Dance?* 606-616.

[287] Ibid., 612.

reason for this is that economic problems are not the decisive independent variable for religious tensions. Economic problems, only in combination with a problem of order, lead to tensions among religions.[288]

Economic problems hampered the Janata Dal government which ruled India from 1989 until 1991, as well, and reached their height during the Congress rule between 1991 and 1996. And, in combination with the force to liberalize the domestic market, they changed the circumstances for the traditional "social contract"[289] of society. But social contract in this case meant that the state had for many years protected its own industries by opting for an import-substituting industrialization (ISI) after independence. The reason for this was that Indian business dominated the government. According to Chhibber, "Indian capitalists in the years immediately after Independence refused to countenance a state with wide-ranging regulatory and interventionist powers, and organized effectively against it."[290] For Indian industry, it was not necessary to become competitive because the ISI protected Indian industry from foreign imports. But, with the economic crisis of the late 1980s, a change in Indian policy became necessary. In the eyes of the classes with lower economic status, concerns about economic problems were high[291] but globalization became more a threat for the ruling elite. Thus, economic reasons were not necessarily decisive for the increasing tensions between Hindus and Muslims. They were, however, one reason for the increasing support of the BJP by capitalists and landowners.

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[288] The examination of Chhibber, Misra and Sisson, *Order and the Indian Electorate: For Whom does Shiva Dance?* (Table 5 in combination with Table 6) show the following data for the different states. As the data show, neither economic problems nor the problem of order alone is decisive. The consensus among religions is in those states little, where economic problems in combination with problems of order are highest.

Problem	Andrha Pradesh	Bihar	Madhya Pradesh	Mahara-shtra	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal
Economic / infrastructural	31	44	47	62	48	33
Order and community	64	36	17	24	45	63
Consensus among religions	83	53	90	86	64	89

[289] Crawford, *The Causes of Cultural Conflict: An Institutional Approach*, 3-43

[290] Vivek Chibber, *Locked in Place. State-Building and Late Industrialization in India* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2003), 9.

[291] Chhibber, Misra and Sisson, *Order and the Indian Electorate: For Whom Does Shiva Dance?* 615.

These property-owning classes felt threatened by free markets and were attracted by the BJP's rhetoric of national self-reliance because measures for self-reliance would strengthen their market position.[292]

Additionally, as shown in this thesis, economic problems and globalization led to reforms in India, which weakened the power of the center and strengthened the power of the states. Together with the rising self-consciousness of marginalized groups, this led to fragmentation of India's political system and to the development of new parties which had their strongholds in different states.

Altogether, this political context prepared the stage for the success of Hindu nationalists between the Ayodhya campaign in 1992 and the BJP's success in 1996 when the BJP seized power. As Jaffrelot argues, the political context and the weakness of the state were the opportunity for the Hindu nationalist network to mobilize the masses and show the power of Hindu nationalism.[293] Between 1980 and 1992, one can find factors in India, identified by Tarrow as key dimensions for evoking a mass movement: "… (1) the opening of access to participation for new actors; (2) the evidence of political realignment within the policy; (3) the appearance of influential allies; (4) emerging splits within the elite; and (5) a decline in the state's capacity or will to repress the dissent."[294] With this came the opportunity during this time period allowing the rise of Hindu nationalism.

What was decisive for the increase of violence in Ayodhya was the combination of two sets of elements.

First, representatives of the Hindu nationalistic network were able to mobilize the masses by provoking the Hindu majority's fear of the Muslim minority. They presented the people with a mix of historical memories, myths and emotions which built up the framework for the polarization of society. In addition, they were able to gain the support of capitalists and landowners. Finally, actions of one side in the conflict provoked

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[292] Radhika Desai, "Culturalism and Contemporary Right – Indian Bourgeoisie and Political Hindutva," *Economic and Political Weekly* 34, no. 12 (1999), 704.

[293] Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*, 8.

[294] Sidney G. Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge England: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 76.

counteractions by the other side. "Together, these inter-group and intra-group interactions combine … to create a vicious cycle that threatens to pull multi-ethnic societies into violence."[295] And the only power which could theoretically break through this vicious cycle was the state.

Second, the Indian state and its institutions were weak and often used the same symbols[296] and codes of behavior which were being used by the Hindu nationalists to mobilize the masses. And there "… has never been any dispute between the state and the Hindu communal leaders over the sacrosanctity of these components of Hindu symbolism and behavioural pattern." With this, the state became unable to arbitrate between Muslims and Hindus and powerless to react vigorously in any case of provocation and violence. According to Basu, the accommodating Indian state radicalized, with its actions, the demands of religious nationalists. "Hindu nationalists are likely to gain a sympathetic hearing from the state because their core supporters, upper-caste Hindus, are so heavily represented within it."[297] And hereby, the stage for increasing violence was set.

In sum, with the Ayodhya movement, the Hindu nationalist network used the institutional flaws of India's political system and the favorable situation of a weak Congress to gain political advantages by mobilizing the masses and provoking violence between Hindus and Muslims. According to Brass, "It should be clear enough by now, therefore, how valuable Hindu-Muslim opposition, antagonism, and violence have been for the fortunes of the BJP."[298]

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[295] David A. Lake and Donald Rothchild, "Containing Fear: The Origins and Management of Ethnic Conflict," *International Security* 21, no. 2 (Autumn 1996), 44. In addition, Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India*, 149-166 shows a case study with a more detailed insight into how this vicious cycle works. In addition Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985). gives an extensive analysis of ethnic conflicts and Donald L. Horowitz, *The Deadly Ethnic Riot* (Berkeley, Calif: University of California Press, 2003). an extensive analysis of violence, and riots their causes and its development.

[296] Hansen, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India*, 148-150.

[297] Amrita Basu, "The Transformation of Hindu Nationalism?" In *Transforming India*, eds. Francine R. Frankel and others (Berkley: Oxford University Press, 2000), 397.

[298] Brass, *The Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence in Contemporary India*, 8.

C. THE KASHMIR CASE AS AN INTERNATIONAL ISSUE OF HINDU NATIONALISM

1. Historical Roots of the Kashmir Conflict

Due to the geographical situation of difficult accessibility to the region, Kashmir remained independent for a long period of time. In 1586, Kashmir was conquered by the Muslim ruler Akbar; was in 1756 a part of Afghanistan, and in 1819 a part of the Sikh Empire. In 1845, Kashmir was annexed by the British. Despite the Muslim majority, the British installed a Hindu ruler for the Kashmir region.

After India's independence, the future of Kashmir was not yet decided. Viceroy Mountbatten had planned a division of India but did not decide the future of Kashmir. During the partition phase of the Indian subcontinent, both countries, India and Pakistan, claimed the Kashmir area. Pakistan argued that a state with a Muslim majority had to belong to the Muslim country of Pakistan, whereas India claimed Kashmir with the argument that a Muslim majority could flourish in a secular India as well. As a result of this dispute, both countries refused to recognize the borders of the neighbor state and gave no guarantee for territorial integrity. The ruler of Kashmir, Maharaja Hari Singh, denied accession of Kashmir to India or Pakistan and hoped to keep Kashmir independent. "He signed a Standstill Agreement with Pakistan on 15 August, the day of independence. He also offered such an agreement with India, but the Indian leaders prevaricated."[299]

However, beginning in June 1947, protests and secessionist movements (in Poonch province) started and led, in October 1947, to a revolt supported by Pakistan in the western part of Kashmir. In awareness of a defeat, Maharaja Hari Singh asked India for military support against the rebels. Even the National Conference of Kashmir which fought the rule of the Maharadja and opted initially for accession of Kashmir to Pakistan supported the resistance against the invaders from Pakistan. Kashmir's Prime Minister, Sheik Mohammed Abdullah supported Maharaja Hari Singh in his efforts to preserve

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[299] Nirvikar Singh, "Cultural Conflict in India: Punjab and Kashmir" in *Identities in Transition: Eastern Europe and Russia After the Collapse of Communism*, eds. Beverly Crawford and Ronnie Lipschutz (Berkeley: University of California International and Area Studies Digital Collection, 1996), 336.

Kashmir's independence and reject Kashmir as being part of one of the two nations in South Asia.[300] His political life is symbolic of the dilemma of the position of Kashmir and the Kashmirii people between Pakistan and India. Arrested by Maharaja Hari Singh, he later became his Prime Minister of Kashmir. In 1953, dismissed and again arrested, he was reprieved but later interned and exiled. In 1975, he became Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir. His hopes to build a bridge between India and Pakistan and to establish independence of Kashmir did not come true.[301]

India's Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, promised support, yet attached the condition that Maharaja Hari Singh declare the accession of Kashmir to India and inform Governor General Lord Mountbatten.[302] After Maharaja Hari Singh carried out this precondition, India sent troops to Kashmir and stopped the insurgencies. However, one third of the Kashmir territory was left in the hands of Pakistan.

This first Kashmir War ended in 1949 after the United Nations was involved. As a result, Kashmir was divided along the cease fire line, later called the "Line of Control" (LOC) into a Pakistani part, called *Azad Kashmir*, and an Indian part, the state of *Jammu and Kashmir*. The state of Jammu and Kashmir can be divided into three regions, Jammu, the Kashmir Valley, and Ladakh. Each region is dominated by a different ethnic group. The bulk of the population lives in the Kashmir Valley which has a Muslim majority. Jammu is settled by a Hindu majority, but also includes a significant Muslim minority. Ladakh is sparsely populated and inhabited mainly by Buddhists. The overall majority in

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[300] Ashutosh Varshney, "India, Pakistan, and Kashmir: Antinomies of Nationalism." *Asian Survey* 31, no. 11 (November 1991): 999-1000.

[301] Paula A. Newberg and Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *Double Betrayal: Repression and Insurgency in Kashmir*. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1995. 13-20.

[302] Excerpt of the letter addressed to the then Governor General of India, Lord Mountbatten (October 26, 1947): "With the conditions obtaining at present in my State and the great emergency of the situation as it exists, I have no option but to ask for help from the Indian Dominion. Naturally they cannot send the help asked for by me without my State acceding to the Dominion of India. I have accordingly decided to do so and I attach the Instrument of Accession for acceptance by your Government. The other alternative is to leave my State and my people to free-looters. On this basis no civilized Government can exist or be maintained. This alternative I will never allow to happen as long as I am Ruler of the State and I have life to defend my country. I am also to inform your Excellency's Government that it is my intention at once to set up an interim Government and ask Sheikh Abdullah to carry the responsibilities in this emergency with my Prime Minister." See the full text of the instrument of accession on Kashmir Information Network, "Instrument of Accession Executed by Maharajah Hari Singh on October 26, 1947," http://www.kashmir-information.com/LegalDocs/KashmirAccession.html (accessed January 01, 2009).

Jammu and Kashmir are the Muslims. Against the agreement with the United Nations, Pakistan did not withdraw its troops from Azad Kashmir and India did not reduce its troops in Jammu and Kashmir. Likewise, the promised plebiscite of the Kashmirii people about the future of Kashmir was not held after the first Kashmir War. During the Sino-Indian War in 1962, India lost a part of Jammu and Kashmir to China, called *Aksai Chin*. In the following period, the Kashmir dispute appeared several times on the agenda of the United Nations and the Security Council of the United Nations. However, the dispute was not solved but escalated into new wars between India and Pakistan.

In 1965/1966, India blamed Pakistan for supporting a rebellion in Jammu and Kashmir. This dispute developed into the Second Kashmir War which ended in September 1995 after intervention of the great powers and the United Nations. After mediation by the Soviet Union, both countries signed the Tashkent Declaration in January 1966. This treaty fixed the status quo ante bellum and committed both countries to not interfere in each other's internal affairs, but did not solve the dispute behind the war.

In the course of the The Bangladesh Liberation War, fighting between India and Pakistan occurred again in 1972, and also affected the area of Kashmir. It ended with the Pakistani surrender in East Pakistan and the founding of Bangladesh. In the Kashmir area, during the war, the Indian army gained some territory but ceded it after the war according to the Simla Agreement of July 1972. This agreement cemented the Line of Control (LOC) as a kind of a border between both countries in the Kashmir region. But the LOC did not clearly define the border in the area of the Siachen Glacier near the town of Kargil.[303]

This resulting unclear border situation was a pretext for the Kargil War in 1999 when the Pakistani military occupied Indian positions along the Kargil sector of the LOC. India reacted with massive use of regular Indian land and air forces and restored the situation as it had been prior to the war. Remarkable is that all wars between India and

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[303] For more details about the roots of the conflict and different perceptions, see: Chadda, *Ethnicity, Security, and Separatism in India*, 60-71.

Pakistan have been limited to the region and, as well, limited regarding the use of arms. Neither of the states has tried to escalate the war in order to defeat the opponent.

Besides these wars, tensions were threatening to escalate towards renewed wars in 1987 (after the political unrest in India's Punjab), 1990 (in the course of the turmoil in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir) and in 2001/2002 (in the aftermath of an attack by terrorists on the Indian parliament on December 13, 2001 and the attack on the military installation of Kaluchak on May 14, 2002). All these incidents led to belligerent rhetoric from both sides and to troop movements in the area of Kashmir. In the end, different reasons prevented a war and saved peace between India and Pakistan.[304] However, the dispute about Kashmir has involved India, Pakistan and China, three nuclear powers and made, according to the CIA, the area of Kashmir "… the site of the world's largest and most militarized territorial dispute … ."[305]

After the crisis of 2001/2002, India and Pakistan established measures to defuse the conflict between the two countries. The result was the announcement of a "composite dialogue" between the countries in January 2004. This dialogue maintained discussions to defuse the Kashmir conflict and the armed stand-off in the Siachen Glacier region. The dialogue has not solved the Kashmir problem, so far, but helped to find measures of confidence-building and to establish working groups to negotiate possible solutions for problems regarding the Kashmir region.

One further dispute regarding the Kashmir area was the discussion about the construction of the Baglihar Dam by India and use of the water of the Chenab River. But this dispute was solved in 2007 by mediation of water experts of the World Bank. However, this indicated just another step, but not a solution, for the Kashmir conflict. "The concept of partition is anathema to Indians. Kashmir's symbolism to India is as

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[304] Chari, P. R., Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, and Stephen P. Cohen. *Four Crises and a Peace Process: American Engagement in South Asia*. Washington, D.C: Brookings Institution Press, 2007. 149-183. mentions among others pressure from the international community, the negative economic consequences, financial costs, functioning nuclear deterrence, failure of operation "Parakram" and the number of fatalities as a result of de-mining operations, accidents etc. Not least of all, it was the influence of the United States which prevented war. "Washington itself had important interests at stake – and ultimately these helped bring the crisis to an end." Lbid., 164.

[305] The CIA World Fact Book. Central Intelligence Agency, "The World Factbook. India," https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/in.html (accessed January 01, 2009).

critical a consideration as any security significance associated with this fragment of ice and rock threaded by a beautiful valley. India is unwilling to lose even one additional hectare of this land. New Delhi is also concerned that Kashmiri autonomy would set a precedent for breakaway movements in other Indian states (e.g., Punjab or Assam). To Pakistan, Kashmir is symbolic of its national ethos and commitment to protect Muslim interests against Indian encroachment. It believes that the creation of a separate, strongly sectarian nation is incomplete without contiguous Kashmir."[306]

2. Indian Policy Towards Kashmir

Since India's independence, India's politics towards Kashmir have played a major role for Hindu nationalists. The partition of India and the foundation of Pakistan as a Muslim state strengthened the wish of Hindu traditionalists inside the Congress and Hindu nationalists to prove the loyalty of Indian Muslims to their country. The situation in Jammu and Kashmir became a symbol for the threat to India by Pakistan and the Muslims and offered the BJS the opportunity to challenge the Congress ruled government of India. According to Graham, "With his parliamentary role thus restricted, Mookerjee began to search outside Parliament for areas in which the government could be challenged, and he turned to the Kashmir dispute."[307]

He did so by supporting the agitations of the Praja Parishad, a political party in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, which refused the "Delhi Agreement" of July 1952 in which representatives of the Indian government and the government of Jammu and Kashmir agreed to most of the disputed matters about the status of Jammu and Kashmir. As did the Praja Parishad, the BJS supported the full integration of Jammu and Kashmir into India. But, according to Graham, these agitations created a failure for the BJS because "… it had given Nehru the ample opportunity to demonstrate that it was no different from other Hindu communalist organizations, for all its pretensions to be a progressive and a modern political force. Moreover, instead of strengthening its position in constitutional politics and extending a welcome to those Hindu traditionalists whom

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[306] Global Security, "World Military Guide: The World at War. Kashmir," http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/kashmir.htm (accessed January 01, 2009).

[307] Graham, *Hindu Nationalism and Indian Politics*, 35.

the Congress no longer wanted, it had wasted its resources and its energies on a fruitless venture."[308] However, the pressure the BJS put on India's government led at least partly to a shift in India's official policy towards Jammu and Kashmir according to the BJS.[309]

Officially, Article 370 of India's Constitution offers the State of Jammu and Kashmir special autonomy rights,[310] but the transfer to political practice withered from the beginning. De facto, the autonomy rights of the state of Jammu and Kashmir were little by little annulled and Jammu and Kashmir was integrated into India and controlled by the Indian government. "Most important, on 14 May 1954, Constitutional Order 1954

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[308] Graham, *Hindu Nationalism and Indian Politics*, 40.

[309] Baxter, *The Jana Sangh; a Biography of an Indian Political Party*, 116.

[310] **370. Temporary provisions with respect to the State of Jammu and Kashmir.—**(1) Notwithstanding anything in this Constitution,— (*a*) the provisions of article 238 shall not apply in relation to the State of Jammu and Kashmir; (*b*) the power of Parliament to make laws for the said State shall be limited to—(*i*) those matters in the Union List and the Concurrent List which, in consultation with the Government of the State, are declared by the President to correspond to matters specified in the Instrument of Accession governing the accession of the State to the Dominion of India as the matters with respect to which the Dominion Legislature may make laws for that State; and (*i i*) such other matters in the said Lists as, with the concurrence of the Government of the State, the President may by order specify.
Explanation.— For the purposes of this article, the Government of the State means the person for the time being recognised by the President as the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir acting on the advice of the Council of Ministers for the time being in office under the Maharaja's Proclamation dated the fifth day of March, 1948; (*c*) the provisions of article 1 and of this article shall apply in relation to that State; (*d*) such of the other provisions of this Constitution shall apply in relation to that State subject to such exceptions and modifications as the President may by order specify: Provided that no such order which relates to the matters specified in the Instrument of Accession of the state referred to in paragraph (*i*) of sub clause (*b*) shall be issued except in consultation with the Government of the State:
Provided further that no such order which relates to matters other than those referred to in the last preceding proviso shall be issued except with the concurrence of that Government. (2) If the concurrence of the Government of the State referred to in paragraph (*i i*) of sub-clause (*b*) of clause (1) or in the second proviso to sub-clause (*d*) of that clause be given before the Constituent Assembly for the purpose of framing the Constitution of the State is convened, it shall be placed before such Assembly for such decision as it may take thereon. (3) Notwithstanding anything in the foregoing provisions of this article, the President may, by public notification, declare that this article shall cease to be operative or shall be operative only with such exceptions and modifications and from such date as he may specify: Provided that the recommendation of the Constituent Assembly of the State referred to in clause (2) shall be necessary before the President issues such a notification.
Footnote to Article 370:
In exercise of the powers conferred by this article, the President, on the recommendation of the Constituent Assembly of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, declared that, as from the 17th day of November, 1952, the said art. 370 shall be operative with the modification that for the Explanation incl. (1) thereof, the following Explanation is substituted, namely:–*"Explanation* – For the purposes of this article, the Government of the State means the person for the time being recognised by the President on the recommendation of the Legislative Assembly of the State as the *Sadar-I Riyasat of Jammu and Kashmir, acting on the advice of the Council of Ministers of the State for the time being in office." (Ministry of Law Order No. C.O. 44, dated the 15th November 1952). *Now "Governor."

was issued which extended the power of the center over more than defense, communications, and foreign affairs. Over time, then, little was left of the special status of the state of Jammu and Kashmir."[311] According to Aijaz, India's policy towards Kashmir was marked by a mixture of promises to the Kashmirii people, manipulation of elections and abuses of rights. "*In practice*, J&K has oscillated between military occupation and cynical manipulations of parliamentary governance, by the central governments as well as the local satraps."[312] This policy was dictated by the wish of the Indian government to keep the state of Jammu and Kashmir as a part of India and to prevent any kind of separatism. The result was not just the mentioned wars with neighboring countries, but violent struggles inside of the state of Jammu and Kashmir as well.

The reasons for these struggles were diverse. On the one hand, it was India's politics towards Kashmir; on the other hand it was Pakistan that stirred the separatists in Jammu and Kashmir and partly sparked the conflict towards an insurgency. At the beginning of the struggles, religious reasons were not decisive for resistance in Jammu and Kashmir, or for the request of the Kashmirii people for self-determination. It was more the desire to gain recognition as a region with vested autonomy rights that set the tone for the actions of the Kashmirii.

Violent insurgencies gained momentum only after the 1987 elections. This election cast a shadow of fraud and violence especially against a new, Muslim-based, opposition coalition. Violence escalated in Jammu and Kashmir after the arrest of members of the Muslim opposition. Militant groups of Kashmirii people and Pakistan-backed Islamist groups assassinated pro-Indian politicians and attacked government targets. These struggles were another reason for Pakistan to accuse India of violations of human rights and for India to accuse Pakistan of provoking the conflict in Jammu and Kashmir. With these mutual accusations, both sides were unable to use diplomatic means to work together to defuse the conflict. "By the mid-1990s, it was not only the most serious flashpoint in the region but also among the most likely accelerants for a nuclear

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[311] Singh, *Cultural Conflict in India: Punjab and Kashmir*, 339.

[312] Aijaz Ahmad, *Lineages of the Present: Ideology and Politics in Contemporary South Asia*, 255.

crisis anywhere on the globe. Thus, an internally driven crisis evolved into a regional security threat that also provides a political rallying point, particularly among nationalist groups who favor a more overt program of nuclear weapons acquisition."[313]

In 1990, the Indian government put Jammu and Kashmir under federal rule until 1996 and used massive armed forces to suppress the insurgencies. The following period was marked by violence and rights abuses on both sides, the forces of the Indian government and the insurgency groups. This led to devastating numbers of casualties and further escalation of the conflict.[314] Only after the 2002 election, which was seen as fair, was the way opened for negotiations with the various Kashmirii groups about the future of Jammu and Kashmir. The corrupt National Conference government was defeated and replaced by a coalition built of the Congress Party and the People's Democratic Party (PDP). The negotiations were accompanied in 2004 by the announcement of a four-year $5 billion development package to improve infrastructure, education and tourism in the region. These means and the negotiations between the Indian government and the various Kashmirii groups neither led to a stable situation in Jammu and Kashmir, nor did they end the violence. Every crisis between India and Pakistan, such as the Mumbai attacks of 2008, or an increase of violence in the region always rekindles the spiral of violence. However, the negotiations and additional confidence-building measures did lead to a decrease of violence and opened, in principle, the path for a peaceful solution of the problem.[315]

The BJP position towards the Kashmir case was nearly unchanged in comparison to the BJS position of 1952. According to Austin, the party "… was opposed to any concessions in Kashmir, Punjab or Assam and was vehemently hostile to what it saw as the privileged position of the Muslim community."[316]In its Election Manifesto of 1989,

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[313] Global Security, *World Military Guide: The World at War. Kashmir*

[314] A detailed list of fatalities in Jammu and Kashmir and its development over time is given on: http://satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/jandk/data_sheets/annual_casualties.htm.

[315] For a detailed overview oft the current situation in the Kashmir region, see Freedom House, *Map of Freedom in the World. Kashmir 2008.*

[316] Dennis Austin, *Democracy and Violence in India and Sri Lanka* (New York, NY: Published in North America by the Council on Foreign Relations Press for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1995), 18.

the BJP blamed the Congress Government for the situation in Kashmir. "The Rajiv regime is bathed in blood and muck from head to foot, from Punjab to Assam and from Kashmir to Sri Lanka. Everything Rajiv Gandhi touches ends up in a bloody mess."[317] The BJP solution for the Kashmir problem was "… setting up barbed wire fencing along the Indo-Bangladesh borders with Pakistan, effective and immediate measures to weed out the foreigners from Jammu Kashmir, Rajasthan and Gujarat."[318]

3.   Explanations

Various reasons led to the rigid position of India's government towards the Kashmir case. The water resources of Kashmir and its function as a buffer zone were not decisive for India's intransigent behavior towards the status of the state Jammu and Kashmir. Rather, it was the fear that territorial concessions could lead to a domino effect in other regions and challenge India's integrity and territorial unity, which was decisive for the behavior of the Indian government.

But these rational arguments were not exclusively decisive for the absence of a diplomatic solution of the Kashmir problem. Especially in 1952, and after 1971, a diplomatic solution seemed possible, but was prevented by the domestic situation in India. In case of any concessions, the Indian government had to deal with harsh reactions by the Hindu nationalists who exploited the case of Kashmir as a sign of weakness of the government. The example of India's politics towards the Kashmir case shows how Hindu nationalists used an issue for domestic purposes, provoked tensions, and in the 1950s, forced the policy of the ruling Congress party into a more nationalistic direction. Hindu nationalists were able to make the status of Jammu and Kashmir (and Article 370) into a national issue of prestige for the Indians. Therefore, the status of Jammu and Kashmir was determined as a public matter.

With this, India's position was fixed by the position of Hindu nationalists and the Indian government was trapped by the Hindu nationalist position. The Indian government faced the contradiction between the formal status of Jammu and Kashmir and public

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[317] Austin, *Democracy and Violence in India and Sri Lanka,* 85.

[318] Ibid., 86.

opinion driven by the Hindu nationalists. What Morgenthau argues in general, for any government, became especially true for the Indian government in the Kashmir case "It must resist the temptation to sacrifice what it considers good policy upon the altar of public opinion, abdicating leadership and exchanging short-lived political advantage for the permanent interest of the country. It must also avoid widening the unavoidable gap between the requirements of good foreign policy and the preferences of public opinion."[319] In the case of Jammu and Kashmir, the Congress led government chose to support the Hindu nationalist position in order to gain popular support. Even more, the Hindu nationalistic agitation in 1952 and the constant threat by Hindu nationalists makes the Kashmir case an issue of Indian identity. "Kashmir, in brief, symbolizes the enmity that Hindus and Muslims harbor for one another."[320]

But, in fact, the initial causes for the conflict were less a primordial conflict between Hindus and Muslims than a conflict about inequality between ethnic groups. The rulers of Kashmir were Dogra Rajputs and occupied a majority of government posts. "Thus, while Muslims were at the bottom of the social hierarchy, Hindus such as Kashmirii Pandits were also less favored by the rulers."[321] Already, in 1931, a Muslim revolt against the feudal regime of the ruler took place but was based more on a conflict about social division in Kashmir and less about religion. After partition of India and Pakistan, "… identity politics seemed to dominate the struggle as it escalated to violence."[322] Again, one reason for this shift was the influence of the Hindu nationalists and their pressure on the Indian government.

Therefore, regarding Kashmir, Hindu nationalists used the same means they used in the Ayodhya case. And, again, it was the weakness of the state which was decisive for the deterioration of the conflict and increasing violence in the 1980s. At the beginning of the conflict, it was the Indian constitution and the kind of separation of powers which made it possible that special rights for Jammu and Kashmir were undermined. "First, the

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[319] Hans Joachim Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations; the Struggle for Power and Peace*. 5th rev. and reset ed. New York; distributed by Random House, 1972: Knopf, 1973, 147.

[320] Global Security, *World Military Guide. The World at War. Kashmir.*

[321] Singh, *Cultural Conflict in India: Punjab and Kashmir*, 334.

[322] Ibid., 335.

constitution is too easily amended. Second, the courts have too limited a jurisdiction vis-à-vis the legislative / executive branch of the government."[323] Later on, the Indian government was pushed by the fear of losing control. Feeling threatened by its neighbor and forced by Hindu nationalists, the Indian government unintentionally provoked the resistance of the Kashmirii people. Chadda concludes: "Thus, in Punjab and Kashmir, the Congress's progressive loss of control over its state units translated not only into the supranational State's loss of relational control over India's ethnonations, but also into India's loss of relational control over its neighbor in foreign policy, and its growing vulnerability to superpower politics and the cold war."[324] In Jammu and Kashmir, the result was the transformation of the mostly peaceful protests into violent insurgencies, the increasing infiltration of Muslims from Pakistan, and the beginning of a spiral of violence. According to Ganguly "The insurgency stemmed from a process of political mobilization against a backdrop of institutional decay. … The insurgency's immediate precipitant was the flawed state election of 1987."[325] Once the insurgency erupted "Pakistan's involvement in the crisis has tipped the balance towards cultural (as opposed to class or ideological) conflict. Its support for Kashmir's incorporation into Muslim Pakistan mobilized Kashmiri Hindus to struggle for incorporation into India."[326]

This development started parallel to the decline of the Congress-ruled government in the 1980s, but rose to a peak during the time of the Janata Dal led coalition (National Front) government from 1989 to 1990. This government was nearly incapable of cohesive policy because it included various coalition partners from left wing communists to the Hindu nationalistic BJP which made it difficult to find a common position for all coalition partners. The only possible politics of this weak government towards the

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[323] Singh, *Cultural Conflict in India: Punjab and Kashmir*, 345.

[324] Chadda, *Ethnicity, Security, and Separatism in India*, 112.

[325] Sumit Ganguly, "Slow Learning: Lessons from India's Counterinsurgency Operations in Kashmir," in *India and Counterinsurgency*, edited by Sumit Ganguly and David P. Fidler (New York: Routledge, 2009), 79.

[326] Singh, *Cultural Conflict in India: Punjab and Kashmir*, 333.

Kashmir case was the continuation of the politics of former governments. This meant continuing with a politics, based on a position made by pressure of Hindu nationalists, to ensure national integrity at any price.

And, it was this weak government which had to face the challenges of the changing world order with its consequences for the region. Against this background, it was impossible for the Indian government to respond with vigor and confidence to the developments in Jammu and Kashmir. In sum, the weakness of the Indian state led in the 1980s to a loss of India's position as a regional major power and to an increase of domestic problems with increasing factionalism and separatist movements as in Punjab and Assam.[327]

The Hindu nationalists used this weakness to strengthen their own domestic position. Yet, in contrast to the Ayodhya case, the Hindu nationalists did not need to provoke a strong Indian position regarding Jammu and Kashmir. For them, it was sufficient to ensure the continuation of India's policy since independence. Corbridge gives one example for this when in 1990 "… many Hindus were forced to leave the Vale of Kashmir. The BJP played the anti-Muslim card in response to the Kashmir uprising, and gained further support from high-caste Indians opposed to the pro-reservations agenda of the National Front government (1989-91)."[328] The BJP claimed that the population of the Hindu dominated parts of Jammu and Ladakh was discriminated against by the Muslim dominated part of Kashmir and, in addition to this, threatened by infiltrating terrorists trained in Pakistan. These factors created, in the BJP's opinion, an anti-India atmosphere in the state of Jammu and Kashmir and threatened India's sovereignty. Therefore, the BJP demanded stronger action by the Indian government against the secessionist movement in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, and against their Pakistani supporters.

One of the reasons why the government had not acted with the proper strength the BJP desired is found in Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, which guaranteed the state of Jammu and Kashmir special autonomy rights. Thus, the BJP opposed Article 370 of

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[327] See: Chadda, *Ethnicity, Security, and Separatism in India*, 286.

[328] Corbridge, *'the Militarization of all Hindudom'? The Bharatiya Janata Party, the Bomb, and the Political Spaces of Hindu Nationalism*, 234.

the Indian Constitution.[329] According to Mailik, the Hindu nationalists argue officially that Article 370 "… was only a temporary arrangement, and it creates a psychological barrier between the people of India and Kashmir."[330] But, in practice, even when this barrier existed, it was caused by the Indian politics of the past towards the state of Jammu and Kashmir. As shown, Article 370 had withered in practice since India's foundation for different reasons and the demand for withdrawal of Article 370 was, for the BJP, nothing else than a kind of loyalty test for the Muslims in Jammu and Kashmir.

But, the Kashmir case was not just a domestic issue of demonstrating power by mobilizing masses. Rather, it was an international issue involving Pakistan, China and the United Nations. Besides the policy of Pakistan and China, it was as well the then rigid position of India which prevented a diplomatic solution of the Kashmir problem, led to the Kashmir Wars and the awakening of "ethnic terrorism"[331] in the region.

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[329] See Ahuja, *BJP and the Indian Politics*, 206-217. In addition, Ibid, 304-305 cited a BJP pamphlet: "The ruling party remains chronically unable and unwilling to insulate issues of national unity from considerations of petty political or electoral advantages and lacks courage to do its obvious duties like abolition of the 'temporary' provision of Article 370." For further information about the BJP position towards the Punjab problem see Ibid., 218-235, to the Assam problem, see Ibid, 236-242, to the Tamil Nadu see Ibid., 251-258. The book is written by a supporter of the BJP.

[330] Malik and Singh, *Hindu Nationalists in India: The Rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party*, 122.

[331] Horowitz, *The Deadly Ethnic Riot*, 482.

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V.   CONCLUSION

The examination of the development of the BJP's behavior over time and its behavior in two cases show that the BJP acted as the theoretical statements about party politics predicted. On basis of a strong ideology, embedded in a powerful network of collateral organizations, the BJP tried to change the identity of India's nation-state in the sense of Hindutva. The Ayodhya campaign was an example of how Hindu nationalists tried to establish their view of the Hindu nation-state. The Kashmir case shows how successful Hindu nationalists can influence India's policy by influencing public opinion and putting pressure on the government.

However, the BJP was not able to change India's national identity. Even if large parts of Indian society were prone to adopt the Hindu nationalistic point of view, the BJP's overall attempt to change India's identity was not successful. In the short run, the Ayodhya campaign was a success for the BJP, but the aftermath of the campaign showed the limits of any attempt to change India's national identity. Although India has changed its basic economic orientation and today plays another role in international politics, it is still a secular and tolerant democracy based on the thoughts of Gandhi and Nehru.

After recognizing that the chances of identity change for the entire Indian society were limited, the BJP showed a remarkable sense of pragmatism and instinct for the reachable in practical politics. After Ayodhya, it acted less as a social movement but more as a political party which had learned its lessons. It developed the ability to position itself as a responsible political force and centrist alternative to the Congress, without denying or losing its core party identity. Thus, the BJP did not change the basic orientation of the party, but allowed it to reach compromises and build coalitions.

Tactical shifts, a moderate rhetoric and different strategies in different states were decisive for the success of the BJP in building coalitions. The BJP used the features of India's federal system and the trend towards factionalism to present the party to the electorate with different images. In the Hindu heartland, the BJP is still a strong Hindu nationalistic party with strong ties to the Sangh Parivar. Here, the BJP has been able to impose its nationalistic agenda, up to a certain extent, on practical politics. Outside the

Hindu heartland, it presents itself as a strong party based on moderate Hindu nationalism and as a centrist alternative to the Congress. In these states Hindu nationalism has been reduced to a kind of Hindu-conservatism. This dual strategy gave the BJP the opportunity to gain ground even in the states outside of the Hindu heartland. Thus, India's federalism and the trend to factionalism forced the BJP to adapt the party's behavior in order to play a major role in Indian politics.

But, it was as well these factors which prevented a shift towards a Hindu nationalistic policy on the national level when the BJP was in power to rule India. The diversity of India's society is mirrored in the division of the Lok Sabha. The necessity of coalition building hampered imposing an extremistic policy. The BJP was dependent on coalition partners and only able to impose a nationalistic position in cases where it found common ground in society. The test of nuclear bombs in 1998 and the Kargil War in 1999 were such incidents when a strong nationalistic policy of the BJP government could rely on the support of the majority of the population. But again, any further attempt to misuse this favourable situation in order to impose Hindu nationalistic positions (e.g., to win back the territory of Kashmir occupied by Pakistan during the first Kashmir War) would have eroded this base of supporters and have led to a split of the coalition. The election results of 2004 showed how changeable the electorate in India is.

Currently, it is unlikely that the BJP and the Sangh Parivar will be successful in changing India's national identity towards Hindutva. But, the fragmentation of the Indian party system with its permanent change in party coalitions might harm the Indian's belief in the power of democracy. In the long run, it may lead to the desire for a strong national leadership and an unambiguous political direction without dependence on constantly changing smaller allies. This might be the chance for the BJP to gain power again. If the BJP maintains success with its strategy to present itself as a responsible centrist alternative to the Congress, under strong leadership with a clear program to lead India to greatness, it will be an alternative for voters who are disappointed in India's political system of today.

Intentionally or not, during its time of ruling India, the BJP twice demonstrated the unifying character of strong leadership. First, in May 1998, after testing India's nuclear bombs, public support for the BJP was at its peak, and second, in 1999 after winning the Kargil War. In both cases, the BJP was able to cover domestic problems by showing strength in foreign affairs. And, in both cases, the BJP used military power to unify India's population and ensure support for its policy. Keeping these examples in mind, it is doubtful whether a BJP led government will act in the future as responsibly as India's government acted 1999 when it ended the Kargil War without sending troops across the border to the Pakistani occupied part of Kashmir.

Thus, to rely just on India's federalism and on the population's deeply grounded belief in liberal democracy as a means to prevent a shift towards Hindutva is not sufficient. The BJP and the Sangh Parivar demonstrated that they are able to use any opportunity of weakness of their opponents to gain their own advantages. In particular, a weak Indian state and weak state institutions are causes of worry. As long as secularism is not unambiguously rooted in the constitution and the principles of a tolerant nation-state, in the sense of Gandhi, are not anchored in the constitution, the judicative will not have the power to protect the foundation of the Indian nation-state. This still offers Hindu nationalists the opportunity to use the terms "Hinduism" and "Hindutva" officially in the secular sense, but also subliminally, as a means to exclude parts of Indian society. Moreover, Hindu nationalists will have the chance to transfer Hindu nationalism into a new form of Indian nationalism, contrary to the ideas of Gandhi and Nehru. To prevent a future discussion about the national identity of India and avoid a development away from the ideas of Nehru and Gandhi, the Indian constitution has to be more unambiguous.

Additionally, weak governmental institutions, in combination with a corrupt executive power (e.g., the police), favor the risk that Hindu nationalistic forces will have the chance to use any opportunity to exploit a favorable situation in order to impose elements of Hindu nationalistic policy in practice. Although it is, in the short run, unlikely that the BJP will change course again towards a strong Hindu nationalistic policy, it is wise to still watch the BJP with an "eagle eye." It is still a political party based on Hindutva. And, as the examples of Ayodhya in 1992, Kargil in 1999 and

Gujarat in 2002 show, it would not hesitate to use all possible means to gain political advantages and impose Hindu nationalistic positions wherever and whenever possible.

Finally, the fact that, for many of India's political parties, ideological orientation is not as important for building a coalition or, more importantly, refusing an offer for coalition building, is also a cause of worry. If the desire for power is the overarching goal for political parties in India, and a Hindu nationalistic orientation is not a valid reason for the exclusion of coalition building, Hindu nationalism is then presentable and acceptable. Therefore, Hindu nationalism will not be rejected and the final goal of Hindu nationalism, a change of national identity, can be transferred into practical politics "through the backdoor," under the guise of moderate rhetoric and tactical shifts by the BJP.

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